

SUPPLEMENT TO THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS.

CHRISTMAS, 1851.

CHRISTMAS LOVE SPORTS.

ILLUSTRATED BY G. THOMAS.

HAD we the muse of Herrick, this subject, so delightfully depicted by our Artist, might be fitly described by us. He would have related how, while binding a garland, he found Cupid among the roses, took him and put him in his goblet, and drank him up with the wine. He would also have descended on the Parliament of said Roses, and celebrated his mistress's riband as "thezonulet of Love." Ditties, anacreontic and bacchanalian, would we pen numberless, could we indite, like Herrick, a hymn to Venus or to Bacchus, a lyric to Mirth, or a canticle to Apollo. "Nobly wild, not mad," we would ask for our wine in crystal, and

Thus and thus
Would see'st in puris naturalibus;

and so wisely love that one kiss should ensure incorruption and immortality. As was his to him, our Julia should be to us the "Flaminica Dialis, or Queen Priest;" and here the chaplet, the inarculum, the white vestures, in which

To appear
Love for our very many trespasses.

These and a thousand pretty fancies, noble and chaste, should make our columns breath balm, myrrh, and nard; for we should express "all things sweetly and in comely wise," and tell how roses became red, violets blue, and lilies white; how Oberon had erected a fairy temple or chapel, built "without lime, or wood, or stone;" how, too, he gave a wondrous feast; and how, finally, he was taken half-tipsy to his bed, in the midst of his cavernous palace, so curiously edified and decorated.

produce one, for my humorous genius has fled from me, and has stolen my ideal."

"Stolen your ideal?" inquired Lancelot, with surprise. "Unquestionably," answered Lucenera. "Are you a bookseller, and know not that the purely positive, the absolute real, is now the rage? I provided myself, therefore, with a positive ideal, a Chinese puppet with an umbrella; really a charming thing, I assure you; but my humorous, which I had rendered objective in the form of an ape, took judgement at all the ill-natured, envious criticisms with which the reviewers waged war against him and the ideal. And so he carried off my ideal, has fled from me, sworn, by the printer's ink, an oath as dreadful as that of the gods by Styx never to return to me until I shall have produced something that all the reviewers shall commend; and that I can never hope to do, owing to the martyrdom to which in my just indignation I have consigned their condemnatory pages. Only look here!"

She opened the door of her study: there lay a literary journal, the whole series transcribed by a dager. A sheet of another periodical was powdered with arsenic; three lines from a third swam in sulphuric acid. All the tortures assigned by Dante to the souls in perdition were exhausted on these sheets. "Thus does Lucenera avenge her wrongs," was inscribed in transparent letters on the hangings of the apartment.

"But on him, too, my faithless humorous, on my ideal, and on his present mistress, I have also taken fearful vengeance," continued Lucenera: "I have—here the pseudo-publisher interrupted her. 'This gentleman,' said he, turning to the secretary, possesses the means of reconciling you to the reviewers.' 'Can it be possible?' cried the Fairy—"oh, speak, speak!" The secretary thus addressed her: "You are probably aware that numerous handbooks of geography are in existence. Be so obliging as to turn to the article 'Yellow Tower,' and you will find under that head a full description of the celebrated punch meat. This gentleman makes it over to you. You will invite all critics and reviewers to a punch feast, and, until the meat shall be strained dry, not one will again molest you, and your genius of humour and your ideal will in consequence gladly return to you."

No sooner said than done.

This favourable reception induced the ideal and the humorous to return to the fairy Lucenera; but their images remained behind worked into the tapestry. When the next shower of tea descended, the page was enabled undisturbed to catch it in his cup. He presented it to the Princess, who drank it, and thus the spell was dissolved. The page then tore open his vest and displayed a brilliant star o'er his breast. He was in fact a Prince. "Princess, dost thou love me?" he exclaimed; and the Princess replied, "Yes, Prince, I do love thee!" King Bronto felt a little embarrassed, for he had promised her hand to whomsoever should set her free; but Lancelot explained that she would sooner fall again under the spell than espouse any other than her beloved. Lancelot now spoke, and released the King from his promise. "A noble action is its own reward," added he; "nevertheless, I request you to give me as a souvenir the cup which the Prince held before he was steeled into the canvass." "Take it," said the Prince; "your modest wish brings you good fortune. The cup possesses two remarkable properties: if a maiden drink from it, she is constrained to love its possessor. If, however, he drinks from it, he will have on that day as much gold as he may wish for. Lindamira loves me, and I have in my own country one hundred cubic miles of the purest gold; the cup, therefore, is of no importance to me."

Lancelot replied, "So much the more valuable is it to me. I was aware of its properties, and for that reason gave it the preference."

The secretary asked as his reward for a copy of the lost books of Livy, and went straight back to Emira to pursue his studies with her. Bronto, the Prince, and Lindamira went off to Lucenera's punch feast, where they resolved to celebrate their nuptials. Every road was thronged by the nation of Reviewers.

It seemed as if all mankind were performing a pilgrimage. What occurred to the three travelled there we are at present unable to say; we have lost sight of them, for the crowd increases day by day, and the nation is still marching; but, since we as yet have no clear vision to our Christmas dinner, and no prospect of either roast beef or pudding at home, with the certainty that the punch still will be there, and in the probability of finding a solution of the whereabouts of our *dramatis personae*, we intend journeying thither.

STANLEY MORTIMER;

A TALE OF MENTAL ACTION.

BY JOHN A. HERAUD.

ILLUSTRATED BY THOMAS.

PART I.

MOUNTAIN solitudes, wide wildernesses, the sands on the seashore, desolate heaths, or other of the grander scenes of nature, are not invariably needed by the Child of Imagination for the growth and maturity of the power. The special gift may find appropriate aliment in the simplicity of a country lane, or the gentle elevation of a suburban hill. The life of the town, even, with an occasional rural walk, may be sufficiently suggestive; and the subtile faculty, from the merest hints and commonplace, constructs its peculiar world.

Never was the truth of this proposition more fully illustrated than by the early experiences of Mr. STANLEY MORTIMER. In the pleasant village of Infen, one of the pleasantest, indeed, in the county of Middlesex, he progressed from childhood to boyhood, the tenant of a humble cottage, under the care of a peasant foster-nurse. Orphaned by one parent, and neglected by the other, the Motherless Boy was left to shape his course as he would, or as the kindly caprices of nature might direct. On a dull mind her loftiest scenes are ineffective; with the sensitive soul her meanest are creative.

In that cottage his mother had died, the victim of an unloving husband whose mercantile habits had made him too stern for the domestic affections. During the long period of her declining health and sickness, she had amused herself with some choice books, which, after her death, were left on the bookshelves suspended by the wall of that unostentatious dwelling. From some of these she had taught the lad to read; and they still continued dear to him, as the mother's legacy to his visionary boy.

Yes, Stanley Mortimer was from his infancy of what is called a visionary turn of mind. He was fond of seclusion and solitude, his walks were lonely, and he loved to wander in the unfrequented places of the fields and hedgerows. Many a gleam of running water, like a sunbeam in the ground, had he detected, where the wild rose and the briar grew wildest and thorniest. Often, too, the errant branch of some eccentric elm would form a sort of rude impromptu bridge over an unmetalled runnel of water, on whose uncertain footing it would be the boy's pride to venture an unexpected transition from the trodden ways into the unpathed fields, where, though to tread was to trespass, there was none to warn the intruder. Here and there, too, the stream, fretting a channel would meet with impediment, and so construct the minute image of a waterfall that gave the most distant idea possible of Niagara; yet was it potent with the fancy, and fascinated the opening mind like Lord Byron's description of the Falls of Velino. Then, too, the vision of wild flowers and buttercups, of bud and blossom, around, beneath, and above, made the common fields a paradise to a fancy predisposed to enjoyment; an intelligence unprovided with better and undesirous of other objects.

Nature, in fact, both in her humblest and highest aspects, is suggestive. In this, she observes the true law that should govern a work of art. Her less things conduct the imagination to the greater, and her greatest still lead us on to guess at the infinite.

Simple nutriment like this sufficed for the time the nascent or, at best, infant mind. Stronger meat might be needed in its manlier epoch; but the pure milk of nature, in her most domestic mood, nourished and warmed the maturing boy, whom inexperience of the world had yet left almost a child.

In this most unexciting of all modes of living, Stanley Mortimer found the greatest excitement, whilst other boys in the village found none. One of them was an idiot; and the rest, with a single exception, were such dullards as clods of the valley usually are. But then one and all wanted that background to their experience which Stanley Mortimer had the good fortune to enjoy. What was that? A small store of books left on the cottage shelves by his dear mother.

Happily, the books, though few, were all good. Never was a more select assemblage: there was Spenser's "Faery Queen," and Milton's poems, with the Bible; also, strangely enough, a copy of Marlowe's "Hero and Leander," Chambreyne's "Pharamond," and Shakspeare's poems and sonnets, but not his divine dramas, together with Fairfax's translation of Tasso, and Chapman's Homer. Truly, a singular collection; and for the materials to serve as the groundwork in building up and educating an individual mind, such as would scarcely have been provided by the schoolmaster, abroad or at home, yet calculated to impress both strength and ease to an active intellect.

By these were various faults awakened—wonder, admiration, love, curiosity, hope, fancy, that, imagination, pure intellect, and the ideal reason. Taste was generated by the wizard touch of genius. Stanley Mortimer carried with him into the fields the feelings with which he was inspired in the closet by these sacred volumes. Thus to him was the common meadow so much enchanted land; and wayside objects, no longer trivial, acquired an importance that made them look like angel visitors to an earth where they were strangers.

Vain it would be to enlarge on these emotions; the only singularity in the present case, if one indeed it were, consisted in their being connected with ordinary scenes and events. It was not that to Stanley Mortimer "high mountains were a feeling," but that even the modest and level pasture was a passion. Not that he rhapsodised on its charms; for scarcely is that the most creative genius which expatiates on nature's beauties, but that which utters most melodiously the inner sentiments of the human spirit. Let the poet speak but one word significant of these, and we at once acknowledge his credentials. He knows

our secret, and we are conscious that he knows it. From that moment we are his bondsmen.

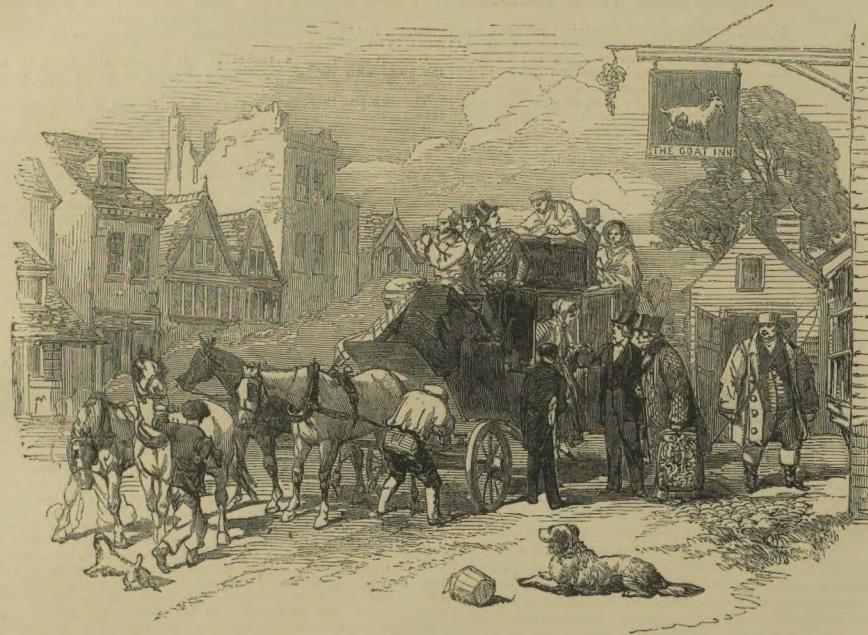
But Stanley Mortimer was not destined to grow up a poet, though his imagination was thus stimulated. It took the direction, not of literary amateurishness, but that of practical character. His fancy was borrowed from the depth of the affections. His readings and meditations had imparted a strange eloquence to his speech, which, when on themes he loved, became a sort of discoursing, such was the choice of phrase and the rhythmical arrangement of words. On other topics he was silent and reserved, and for half a day together would not utter a syllable, engaged either with his book or in moody contemplation.

Such had been the daily course of the life of the Child and the Youth.

Stanley Mortimer was, at the time of which we are writing, sixteen years of age. It was the month of July. From the middle of this to that of August his father, Mr. Travers Mortimer, was accustomed to visit and stay at the cottage for the sake of air and country exercise. On these occasions he usually brought with him a young lady, a distant cousin, about the same age with Stanley, to whom a month out of town was a desirable holiday. Her parents numbered among his very few friends, and he cherished a strong desire that their families might be united. This, perhaps, was his secret reason for thus annually throwing the young couple together. If it were, however, he never divulged it.

Such an apparition was one to be expected and delighted in; and Stanley looked forward to the coming of Alice Grey with anxious joy. She was an only child. Her father was a thriving clothier in Whitechapel. As she had hitherto only moved among the limited circle of his acquaintance, this young lady could only dream of the manner of life beyond. Her ideas were, of course, few; but credit would be given to Alice Grey for more intelligence than she possessed; since, while she was by nature taciturn, her deep black eye was bright and flashing. The damsels, too, had the coal-black hair of an enthusiast; and her features, though comely, were dark of hue. Notwithstanding her complexion, by many she was esteemed beautiful; for her countenance, though she said nothing, was frequently expressive. Moreover, that she was not without aptitude, her skill on the piano testified. Such was Alice Grey.

The day for the arrival of the merchant and his temporary ward had now arrived. By one o'clock the coach had reached the village; and Stanley was at the Goat Inn to give welcome to two of its passengers, his father and the dark-eyed Alice.



A visitation like this gives sudden interest and animation to a rural village. Character and importance supervene at once upon the still life of the scene. The burly coachman, well wrapped up and defended from the weather, no longer seated on the coach-box, treads the earth like a Monarch descended from his throne, but still wielding his whip for a sceptre; while the ostler, ascending to the roof of the vehicle, busies himself with the luggage, an object of anxiety to the outside passenger, whose interference, nevertheless, in his temporary pride of place, he is almost disposed to question. Movements such as these, however, scarcely attracted the attention of the persons of our story. Yet, whatever were the feelings of pleasure attending this meeting, they were attested by no extravagant demonstrations. Simple greetings and simple inquiries, with a gentle pressure of the hand, sufficed all three. Side by side they walked down the lane, and were busied until they had entered the woodland cottage. Dinner was soon prepared and despatched; and, while the moody merchant diverted himself with his favourite pipe, Stanley and Alice took a walk into the village.

For a considerable while, Alice, always reserved, was mute; and Stanley, agitated by different feelings, felt himself at a loss for a topic. But when he began to speak his discourse soon had reference to his books, and his language had a flow and a learned argument which, transcending the limits of her habitual thinking, had the effect of masking Alice still more reserved than before. But, while she wondered at her companion, she was more puzzled than pleased.

That brief walk over, they returned in ample time for the tea, which, after dinner, promotes so well both the purposes of digestion and of conversation.

"Where have you been?" asked Mr. Mortimer, "and what did Stanley say to you?" he continued, addressing the question to Alice.

"I cannot tell," said the young lady, blushing; "but it was all about his books."

"Books?" exclaimed Mr. Mortimer. "How did he find books in this place?"

"Oh, Sir," said Susan Gilbert (that was the name of his foster-nurse), "the dear boy has always been fond of reading the books that his poor mother left, and which you have never removed."

"Her books?"

And as he spoke, a cloud came o'er the merchant's countenance; but soon a tear glistened in his eye. The angry cloud was dissolved in the more tender symbol of feeling; a cluster of small orbs of perfect crystal, each of which was worth all the planets. "Her books? Ay; but there is something to do in the world besides reading books. Those books? No, no, my dear Stanley, you must henceforth learn to read the order-book, the cash-book, and the ledger. I must have you taught how. You are now old enough to try business. Wherefore, at the month's end, I shall take you with me to the City, and there brush off the cobwebs which reading has not doubt infested your mind. In the counting-house, you must not look at a book—that is beyond those I have mentioned."

The full force of these words was unintelligible to Stanley. They promised him an acquisition of knowledge; what threatening, too, they implied, his experience had not instructed him to appreciate.

The incidents of this prescribed month were few, and apparently insignificant.

Day by day Mr. Mortimer amused himself with the garden, his

meals, and his pipe; seldom venturing out into the green lanes or the fields, being willing rather to bound in, as it would seem, than to expand his mind. He loved to walk in a contracted space, and to recognise the infinite beyond the narrowest limits. Out of that small circle, he was voluntary ignorance; within it, the old man was the central, self-sufficient one, the all-important, one, sole will; the motive power and vital spring of a peculiar universe.

Day by day Stanley and Alice, generally accompanied by Susan, strolled into the road or the byway; into the village, up the hill, along the vale, or along the winding walks by the river; but still her words were few, while his were many. Notwithstanding the fluency of his speech, however, his manner was bashful and awkward. He seemed afraid sometimes, nay, often, to offer his arm, and frequently would resign her altogether to Susan's conversation, while he sauntered apart, wrapt in apparent meditation.

But it was not that his mind was then absent from his companions; on the contrary, Stanley was suffering the acutest misery from their supposed neglect, at least from the neglect of one. Was this the pang of jealousy or despaired love? He could not tell. His heart was perplexed, his mind confused.

How too, was it with her? Naturally reserved, she became embarrassed, peevish a little, and wore a mortified air of offended consciousness. Had Susan been qualified for such an office she might have interpreted their feelings for them, and said, "You are in love. Why not confess to one another?" Had she so said she might have caused to be uttered the words that were doubtless trembling on the lips of both.

As it was, the answer of Alice to Mr. Mortimer was the same on the last day as on the first.

"Well, what has Stanley talked to you about all this while?"

"I cannot tell; but it was all about his books."

Some of these books, too, on an evening, he was in the habit of reading to her—sometimes in one, and sometimes in the other—selecting beautiful passages. Somehow Alice did not cordially sympathise with these. Perhaps she would rather have heard him talk; perhaps, also, on themes more personal.

Stanley was as little satisfied as Alice with himself. Contrary sentiments struggled within him. If he really loved, why not give utterance to his passion? Was it want of courage? Was it delicacy?

One incident might seem to have put an end to this state of doubt. On the very day previous to their departure for London, the bonnet and shawl of Alice had been accidentally placed by Susan on Stanley's bed. Shortly afterwards, entering the chamber, they were observed by Stanley. With a sudden impulse he seized on them, and, pressing them to his lips, kissed them twice or thrice, fervently and reverently. Was this not the action of a man in love? Yet, up to the very moment of departure, Stanley spoke not to Alice on any other than the ordinary topics. His feelings, perhaps, lay too deep for words.

Whether, if, instead of travelling by the coach together, Stanley had been left behind, and consequently had had to take a formal farewell of Alice, those feelings would have found words, we dare not say. As it was, he simply saw her safe home; and, when leaving her in the custody of her parents, left that he likewise had now become a resident of London, and therefore might visit her readily when he should be disposed. Besides, his father was of the party, and the whole proceeding had the most business air imaginable.

PART II.

THE counting-house was not so pleasant a scene of occupation as the village greensward. There were no longer the running stream and the blue sky to contemplate. And for his chamber in the cottage, Stanley Mortimer had now a smaller room, with fewer books—those three, chiefly, with which he was threatened—to which might be added the banker's account and the street directory.

At first these new studies displeased him not; on the contrary, he was rather attracted by their novelty. Besides, his reading had made his mind diligent, and filled it with an honourable ambition. Hence he was ready to encounter difficulties manfully. He rejoiced in mental discipline, and the secret ardour with which poetry had fired his soul only made him enter with more zeal into a new pursuit. The figures of arithmetic were to him as pregnant as those of speech; and a bill of parcels proved little inferior to Homer's catalogue of ships.

It is a mistake to suppose that literature, or the love of it, in any of its forms, is incapable of business. Well would it have been for Stanley had Mr. Mortimer thought so; their minds might then have sympathised and instructed each other. As it was, they dwelt apart. Stanley was left in the counting-house, as he had been in the country, to form his own mind, as he might.

It is true, a somewhat enlarged experience dawned on him. One special source of instruction was opened: it was his delight on Sundays to hear the great preachers of the metropolis. He wandered from church to church, and feasted his ears with the different forms of eloquence. Probably, on week-days, the theatres and concert-rooms would have been visited, but these were places interdicted by his father, who insisted, also, on his evenings being passed at home. While the one enjoyed his pipe, the other studied his book.

Frequently did Mr. Mortimer complain of the bad fellowship of this; but submission was unavoidable. He recognised the mother's failing in her boy, and a tender memory reconciled him to what he felt to be a hardship.

Meanwhile, the sphere of Stanley's information was daily augmented. The market, the newspaper, magazine, review, and the new work from the library, all aided to form the mind which the idealities of country studies had originally stimulated.

And Alice—yes, of Alice something, though little, but that little how significant, must be said. Occasionally, on a Sunday evening, but far from often, Stanley visited her parents—visited her parents, I say, not her, for the fact was strictly so. He loved to talk in her presence; but seldom, and this was partly owing to her own taciturnity, engaged in specific conversation with her. When left alone, it would frequently happen that they would sit entirely silent. Their feelings towards each other were more tender and respectful; but the opportunity of being familiar seemed to dispense with the necessity of explanation. Fatal mistake; an error too often committed by meditative minds—the one fault of the reflective Hamlets in all ages, causing delay in action, and leaving the solution to a crisis, which timely decision would have prevented. That blunder, worse than a crime, both in individuals and in nations, is the fatal source of revolutions, the violence of which might have been tempered by predetermination and active forecast.

It must not be omitted, however, to state, in explanation of their feelings, and by way of apology for their conduct, that both had made a discovery. Alice had discovered that her intellect and information were unequal to Stanley's; and Stanley had also discovered that Alice was not so well educated as himself: nay, that she was deficient in the very rudiments of instruction. Like most of her immediate neighbours, Alice mispronounced the letters "v" and "w," and on such words as "envy" misplaced the accent. The latter he, for some time, reconciled by the examples of Spenser's rhymes, but soon found that, in Alice's case, the peculiarity was due to ignorance, not to poetic association. As his ear became more and more cultivated by the oratory of the pulpit and the conversation of well-instructed men, such peculiarities became more and more displeasing, and ultimately intolerable. Once or twice he pointed out these errors, but found his remark had offended, its importance not being appreciated. A certain amount of knowledge is needed to understand the value of more, and that previous conditionality knowledge poor Alice had not acquired. What a lesson it is to learn, that ignorance can never afford to be proud! As we are all, more or less, necessarily ignorant, the lesson is of universal application. In all of us, our pride is in exact proportion to our ignorance.

Man, proud man,
Drest in a little brief authority;
Most ignorant of what he's most assured,
His glassy essence, like an angry ape,
Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven,
As make the angels weep; who, with our spleens
Would all themselves laugh mortal.

This discovery was not without its effect on the mind of both. It naturally aggravated Stanley's hesitation. As his acquaintance increased, he met, too, with other ladies who had been better nurtured, were more communicative, and who pronounced their words properly. All this was to the disadvantage of Alice. Nevertheless, Stanley's fidelity was not affected by it. His unexpressed passion (if so strong a term be the right one) still remained faithful to its object; his implied attachment, at any rate, prevented his forming any similar relations with either of the more accomplished damsels to whom we have alluded. But this state of things had nothing to induce him to hasten any explicit declaration. It was obviously rather a motive for delay.

But this delay at last irritated Alice. Her parents, too, began to get displeased with it. Never frequent, his calls seemed now to be seldom; however, he had given to no one the right to complain.

"Why," said Mrs. Grey, "if Mr. Stanley has any thoughts of Alice, why does not the man propose?"

"Because," said Mr. Grey, "Alice gives him no encouragement."

The mother was piqued at this, but she confessed that Alice was too reserved, too silent.

slight alteration in conduct would suffice to change this into equivocal encouragement. The means were easy, and were immediately adopted. After two or three visits, the young gentleman thought that he had reason to consider himself as, at any rate, tacitly accepted.

Now was the time for Mrs. Grey's plan. It was Christmas, and the festival of Christmas-day was her chosen opportunity. To feasting at that high tide and the revels afterwards she determined to invite Mr. Kennett and his parents, as well as Mr. Stanley and his father. Her purpose in so doing was to bring the rivals into contact, and watch the effect. She was careful to hint to Mr. Mortimer that the young man was a suitor to Miss Alice, though not an accepted one; and he was as careful to communicate the secret (which, of course, was meant to travel) to his son. Nevertheless, the old man was nettled at the inci-

dent, and so far as he was concerned, at least, it made an unfavourable impression. Stanley, on the other hand, felt troubled, but he resolved not to show it.

Mr. Alfred Kennett was, as we have said, "a nice young man." He was a pattern of trading respectability. His attire was trim, genteel, and new; his manners were attentive and modest. He was not without intelligence, and his conversation was sensible, though not copious. Stanley viewed him with interest. Had he not been previously warned of the cause, he might have resisted his solicitous politeness towards Alice; but, thus precautioned, he recognised in him a sort of privilege with which he was far too honourable to interfere.

Accordingly, when, as usual, Alice took her seat by the pianoforte, instead of hovering close by her chair and watching the motion of her



fingers, as he had been wont to do, Stanley stood at a distance engaged in conversation. Not that he felt indifference, or affected it; but as if he had no right to be pleased or displeased—such was the state of his mind, one as anomalous as the occasion that induced it.

Poor old Mrs. Grey! she soon discovered that she had committed an error; but she, too, found means of suppressing her feelings, and bustled through the evening with apparent complacency.

But the next day brought reflection. To-morrow and to-morrow! We are all wise then; none of us to-day. Our after thoughts are exceedingly prudent, but the prudence has arrived too late.

Alice suffered much chagrin and disappointment. Tutored by her mother, she had made sure that Stanley would show, by his manner at least, that she was not indifferent to him. She now had reason to believe that she was utterly so. Means of retaliation were in her power; she retained a lover, at all events. Nor was the youth ineligible; also, his conduct during the evening had been altogether such as became both his and her position in life. Nothing had occurred either to place him at disadvantage. Stanley might easily have outshone him had he taken the pains, but he made no attempt to shine at all. Nevertheless, the simplest thing said by Stanley without effort was beyond all comparison more important than the gravest remark made by Kennett. Not only the form but the stuff of their discourse was different; both in manner and matter they were contrastable only, not comparable. The contrast, too, would, doubtless, have been greater had they conversed together, but they did not. They merely exchanged civilities; yet in this affair of ordinary intercourse one showed as the prince, one as the peasant. Such is the distinction between minds; also, that in their cultures—not always to be described, but invariably to be felt.

No, no! Alice could not exchange Stanley Mortimer for Alfred Kennett. A few days, and the latter was dismissed.

A few days, and Stanley Mortimer was found in more earnest conversation than usual with a Miss ADELAIDE TRAVERS, the daughter of a respectable merchant, a young lady of much intellect and some

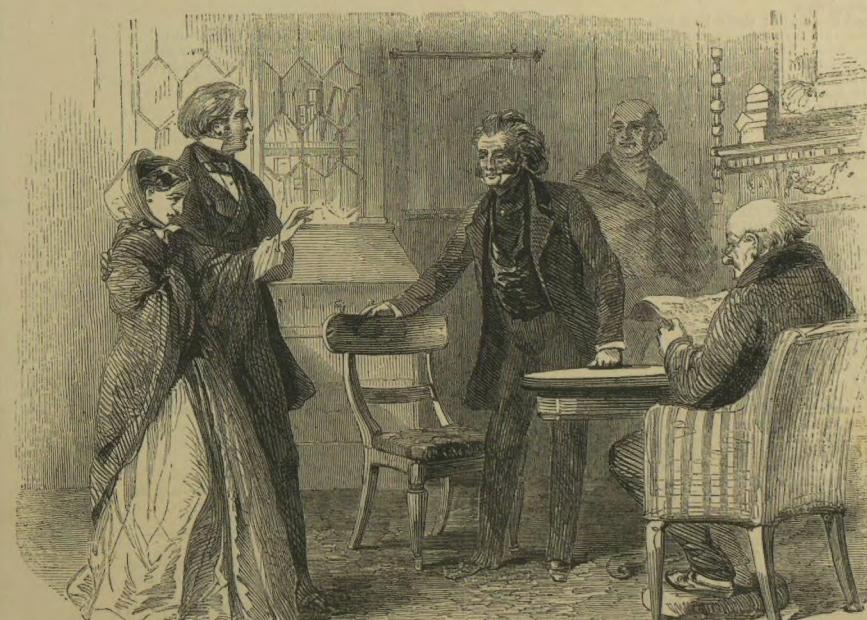
education. She was at any rate, ready to talk, and had a variety of school themes on which she could discourse even learnedly. Stanley yielded himself to the fascination of her company all the more readily, since he now esteemed himself perfectly released from all obligation to Alice. Was he not even a rejected lover? Rejected, but without the privilege of complaint. The love, the courtship, and the rejection, all obeyed the same law—the law of silence. Be it so. The sense of freedom had in it a sense of joy—and the novelty of conversing with such a person as Miss Travers completed the charm.

Alice, like Rosaline in the play, had only prepared the heart of our Romeo for this new Juliet. It was now ripe, and ready for any tender impression. It was now experienced, too, in some of its own workings, and it now understood its oracular suggestions better than heretofore. An interchange of sentiments had, moreover, been effected; and a mutual delight realised in the sound of each other's voices. They told one another what they knew; are long, they described also what they felt. In short, the gentleman proposed, and the lady accepted.

It was not long before Alice was made aware of the fact. The shock it was to her might, however, not be calculated in so undemonstrative a person. Her sorrow was dumb. She shed no tear—she heaved no sigh; but, quietly as before, went through the day; and when she met Stanley her manner was the same as ever.

It was not until after his acceptance by Miss Travers that Stanley heard of Alice having dismissed Mr. Kennett. This somehow gave him a pang; but it was too late to reflect. His word had been passed, and the unspoken must yield to the spoken love.

Owing to his father's circumstances, Stanley's marriage with Miss Travers was delayed for two years. This procrastination was willingly conceded by the lady; perhaps, however, it might have kindled hope in the bosom of Alice. One thing was clear, that she now resorted in her solitude to the study of books. She began to lay the circulating library under contribution. Gradually, too, she developed a taste for society, and seemed to have a purpose in it. She sought to be a member of as many gay parties as possible. But what might be her motive



"She is a prude," said her father; "she'll never gain a husband at such a rate."

Mrs. Grey was still more piqued.

"Prude, is she?" said the old lady. "Well, then, Alice shall change characters for once, and try the coquette."

And the old lady set about her plan as soon as she had conceived it. All the arrangements were at once made in her mind, and nothing remained but to exhibit them, as Mr. Thomas Carlyle would say, in space. This was soon accomplished, for the creatrix was skilful in her work.

Alice, of course, had her admirers. Of these "a nice young man" named Alfred Kennett, was the most assiduous in his attentions. There was no mistaking his *penchant*, for, unlike Stanley, he had more than once spoken out, and had received merely equivocal discouragement. A

for this change of mind and mood she never mentioned to any one, or even alluded to it in the remotest manner.

"Ah!" said Mrs. Grey, "our Alice is indeed a mystery!"

PART III.

YEARS passed. Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Mortimer lived a steady and domestic life; one, too, that seemed happy to themselves and others. A shadow, perhaps, would cross Stanley's mind when he thought of Alice; but this was seldom. His mind was progressive—looked rather to the future than to the past. His personal improvement was rapid, and during his early years his wife sympathised with his opinions and his pursuits.

After marriage, the care of a family limits the range of a woman's acquisitions. Mrs. Mortimer had no leisure to extend hers; while her occupations had the effect of leaving her husband at leisure in the evenings, of which he took advantage to further cultivate his taste and understanding. He read philosophy, poetry, the drama; nor was he without considerable knowledge of science. In a word, his information was far in advance, and his wife was no longer in the same mental relation with him as formerly. Habits of solitude gradually grew upon him, until he felt himself to be alone and living like a star apart.

This ever is the destiny of the highest merit. It is a painful destiny. It is the rock of Prometheus and of Napoleon. The world to such is populous in vain—they hear the noise as of billows far beneath; the station they occupy has no room but for one; in sublime loneliness and self-communion, they breathe air too pure for the gross multitude, nay, even for the few, however near and dear; till, at length, in the aristocracy of their virtue, they become, like *Coriolanus*, compelled to feel and to act,

As if a man were author of himself,

And knew no other kin.

Even such an isolated position was that of Stanley Mortimer. Philosophy, however, had made Stanley master of himself, and therefore of all circumstances. Whatever demons-regnant might rule, and however demons they might govern, he preserved the secret which kept him serene. He had learned that the worshipper of the Ideal must never idolize the image; that, while the sense of the Beautiful grew in his own mind to the Perfect, the shadow of it in the created object, evermore tended to decay and dissolution. With an Faustus-like inconstancy, therefore, did he seek after new types of the sublime, knowing that all were alike unsatisfactory but maintained his fidelity, notwithstanding some strong temptations, to the least, in whose beatings he had recognised the first undoubted response to his own.

The first undoubted response! But not the first, which, perhaps, after all, should not have been doubted. I have said that this thing did not often visit Stanley Mortimer; but when it did, there was a sting in his conscience, the anguish of which time could scarcely mitigate.

At length news reached him of Alice. Her parents had died, and she continued unmarried. Her life was lonely, and so had intraverted meditation worked upon her, that her conduct had become eccentric—in a word, she was lunatic, and needed counsel and help. Distant as was Stanley's relationship to her, he was nearly the only one eligible to be appealed to in such a conjuncture. He hastened to his duty, and then became aware of some facts which caused him to reflect deeply.

Without entering into the particulars of her case, suffice it to add that it was considered expedient that Alice should be placed in a secure asylum, in order, if possible, to her recovery.

It was the lot of Stanley to accompany poor Alice to the proper institution. Never, to him, was a moment of greater excitement: at the asylum itself, never one of less. The case of Alice was with them an ordinary form of mental aberration. The new visitors were at once, and without ceremony, introduced into the receiving-room. Three gentlemen there were seated at a table. One, the presumed proprietor of the establishment, reading the newspaper intently—him nothing appeared to have power to stir from his occupation. He took no notice at all either of the patient or her companion. What a contrast his indifference, to Stanley's awakened sense of consciousness! The other two rose—one maintaining an erect position, with his hands behind him, superciliously contemplating aside the entering strangers; the other bending forward to them complaisantly, and welcoming the inmate within the walls. A business air of sympathy sat on his features, which ill responded to Stanley's feelings. Such, however, were the hands into which, perchance, he confided the person of Alice.

Having performed this painful duty, Stanley returned to the former residence of Alice, that he might place her effects in safe custody. In doing this he found some books and papers which excited his curiosity and surprise. One of these was the only copy of a verse ever written by himself—a lyric, in which he told the passion of a silent love, and which he had addressed thus: "To—." Alice had filled up the blank with her own name. How she had gained possession of the manuscript, Stanley knew not. All that he recollects was, that he had written the stanzas, and then had mysteriously lost them.

The thrill that ran through his frame on this discovery may be imagined by the sensitive; it touched him to trembling and to tears!

Nor was this all. There were other touching signs of his influence, not only on the mind but on the heart of Alice. There were a few books which bore marks of study—such as Pope's "Homer" and Dryden's "Virgil;" and two or three others which nobody would have suspected Alice of even reading. There were pencil-marks and occasional marginal notes, proving that she had also read them with diligence and care.

Nor had this evident study been without results. A copybook or two turned up in the handwriting of Alice. It contained verses of her own composition. They breathed of love and passion, but more in hope than disappointment; the love being too living, not still to believe, not still to hope, despite the rebukes of experience. Alice had evidently in her loneliness cultivated an inner world, brooding on which had placed her in contradiction with the outer, and produced those irregularities of conduct for which she was now a prisoner with the insane.

The tale I tell is over true, and so was the conviction with the agony which burned its way into the conscience of Stanley Mortimer.

When first Stanley knew Alice, she was mute with natural diffidence and comparative ignorance. Contact with him, notwithstanding all appearances to the contrary, had filled her with the desire of knowledge. This she had pursued under serious difficulties. Her limited circle had not afforded the means of her forming a correct pronunciation. Her local peculiarities in this respect had disgusted a too sensitive ear. The consequences need not be repeated. Stanley Mortimer now reflected on all.

"Has," said the self-questioner, "has the blame been mine; or, rather, is it not due to society? Here has been a young and virtuous maiden, brought up by parents having a competence, and moving among the respectabilities of middle-class life, who, nevertheless, was shut out during her prime from instruction that she might have possessed when a child. Might, do I say? Ought she not to have possessed it? Ah! this evil grows from our low-thoughted views of education. For many years Englishmen refused to give the most meagre knowledge of reading, writing, and arithmetic to the masses. That being at length conceded, Englishmen insisted that education should be fitted to the station of the individual. The station of the individual? Why, in a state of society like ours, and with the facilities which the British Constitution gives for the ambitions to rise, who can tell what is the real station of the individual? Is it that in which he is, or that to which he tends? The cotsager's infant in the cradle may become the Lord Chancellor on the woolsack! Should unnecessary difficulties in the shape of removable ignorance be thrown in the way of such a result? That, truly, for so long a while has been the theory. Would that the minds of the powerful would awaken to a more just perception! A plenary education for all classes of the people undoubtedly should be provided by the State; and thereby each individual be empowered to start fairly in the race of competition. Ah! but my thoughts are wandering from poor, poor Alice."

He paused a little, and then resumed:—

"Poor Alice! that the world's spirit of unfairness should intrude into the sanctuary of the inner feelings, and intermeddle with the delicate reciprocities of love! Fitted to your supposed station was the

instruction accorded to your infant years by your parents, who never conceived the slightest censure as applicable to their conduct; for they loved you dearly, and were dearly loved by you. The error lay in the state of public opinion. The darling hope of your life was frustrated by one unconscious fault. Oh, would that my own mind, like yours neglected, had not, by its own energy, outstripped yours! But this is folly!"

Again he paused, and again resumed:—

"Would that I had known, however, that your mind, my beloved Alice, had been in progress. Oh! these records prove that there was vital growth in it. Had I but known that! Now, perhaps, instead of revolving about one idea until it has made itself giddy, it might have been advancing in a right line, under my direction. It might have continued to advance with mine; not educated, as some are, to a standstill point. Pshaw! let me not make bitter my own lot by over-refinement. Adelaida is a like victim; and it requires mutual charity to make even the odds of a chance-medley state of things—such, unfortunately, as the present anomalous social position of the middle class in England. See, for instance, what has been made of educating children according to their arbitrarily-supposed station. So low, very lately, was the general condition of school-teaching, that, on attention being directed to the subject, it was found that the most elementary instruction at national and mechanics' institutes placed immediately the children of the workman in advance of the children of the shopkeeper. To restore their relative position, a London University was then projected. Well-intended as this institution is, there are millions of respectable families who cannot avail themselves of its advantages. No, no! Nothing will meet the want under which the majority suffer but a universal system of plenary instruction for all classes of the people, established by authority, and made imperative on local functionaries. Only in this manner may an evil so extensive be effectively met. Such a system once established, we should have none to blame but great Nature herself for the differences not only in our destiny but our disposition. And to her decrees we must all bow in reverence."

Such were the just but painful reflections of Stanley Mortimer. The evil which thus blocks up the public thoroughfares through which mind has to make its way penetrates into the private chamber, and turns the laces on the domestic heart into furies. It is for society to reduce the inequalities of nature and fortune, and not to aggravate the injustice of either. Whatever prejudice may yet exist in some minds against the plenary education of all classes of the people, the wrong done by the omission of the duty to those who might otherwise be a blessing to themselves and to others stamps it as a national sin. But to proceed with our story. A few brief statements will conclude it.

By the aid and advice of the physician, and association with strangers whose discourse ran on matters unconnected with the fancies that peopled the inner world of her ideas, Alice Grey was sufficiently recovered in the tone of her mind to demand and to receive her freedom. She returned to her former lonely habits. For a while she preserved the appearance of sanity; but the worm was at her heart—the undying worm, that little by little, resumed its power, until the whole was infected with bitterness.

One of the causes which had preserved Stanley Mortimer himself from the vulgarities of his class was his removal, during infancy, from town, and not at too great a distance, where a decided provincialism might be acquired; and another of the causes was his habit of attending the village church on the Sunday. A reader of books, he borrowed his communication from the clergyman, and perused his favourite Spenser and Milton with the accent which he had learned from the pulpit. A wish, indeed, had come over him to enter the Church; and, for the reluctance of his father, that wish would doubtless have been fulfilled. He had more than once told Alice of his desire; and it would seem that her imagination had become impressed with this circumstance. She had pictured Stanley to herself as a clergyman; and, now that he was lost to her, she began in the persons of the clergy to see him. The "dame woman" who followed Dr. Chalmers, poor Alice selected now one and now the other of her favourite preachers, on whom she bestowed her attentions. At last, to preserve a popular minister from her annoyance, it was necessary that authority should interfere, and that she should be placed under proper guardianship. The life of poor Alice had been all illusion; and this was the last.

As to Stanley Mortimer, he sought refuge in the stronghold of philosophy. Much he loved his wife; but he felt how much more he should have loved had she been his first love. Love was now with him a relative, it had then been an absolute. Affection. It would have lived and grown in his soul a pure and simple identity; it would have done so, or he thought it would. His aim was now to acquire that absolute in knowledge which he had lost in love. Vain effort! yet, if we may believe in Kabbalistic mythology, such as the cherubim ever make, and the seraphim are dispensed from. The latter, by loving, know all things; the former, by knowing all things, would learn to love. Labour infinite; while love, by a spontaneous birth, springs at once into being and perfection.

Of these mysterious words Stanley Mortimer knew, because he felt, the meaning fully. In philosophy he trusted he might accomplish that union of Love and Wisdom suggested by its etymology. But the pursuit cost him society. More and more he became a recluse—less and less fitted for the world, and the world for him. Like Alice, he lived in solitude, companioned with his thoughts, and one fixed idea, that formed the centre of their revolutions.

THREE KINGS OF THE EAST.

AN ODE.

I. STROPHE.

STAR of the East! O star of birth!
Illumine Heaven and shine on earth!
Let Kings bow down before the Child,
The mighty to the undefined;
His brow, uncrown'd, is more sublime
Than theirs. Unconscious of his crime;
Theirs darken'd with the shade of sin,
And his untroubled from within;
The coronal of innocence;
His forehead swathed, tressed by sense.
Offspring of Time, too long conceal'd,
Late from Eternity reveal'd!

II. ANTISTROPHE.

Mother of Love! revere thy Son;
The Wonderful, the Sacred One—
Those sovereign sages from his eyes
Gain knowledge and become more wise.
A power flows to them from his,
To note invisibilities.
Thy soul with all its virgin truth,
And his in immortal youth;
And Heaven's decree, its mystic plan,
That suffering perfects godlike man,
O! if creed of sadness!—Mother mild,
Thou weep'st while worshipping thy Child.

III. EPODE.

And ye,
The adoring and the royal three!
Ye Orient Kings, with generous pride,
Who proffer gifts as to your lord,
And homage thus the deified,
By shepherds and by you adored—
Led by his star, ye came from far,
The hopeful, faithful, and the loving:
Such ever read the Heavens, and they
For ever in the starry way,
See bright prophetic planets moving;
New worlds discover; each a soul,
A truth, 'midst other truths to roll,
Maintaining still the harmony,
The crescent music of the sky,
Which still to their attentive ears
Reveals the secret of the spheres.

HOME MYTHOLOGY.

CHRISTMAS CAROLS.

BY WILLIAM T. MONCRIEFF.

ILLUSTRATED BY PHIZ

DOMESTIC SUPERSTITIONS.

BRING the yule-log—feed high the flame—

Gather around the cheerful fire,

And let old superstitions claim

A passing thought ere they expire.

The fairies were a merry set,

Working their spells to aid, to bless,

And to the sad heart dearer yet,

Ever for mirth and cheerfulness!

A song, a song, ere yet too late;

Let youth and mirth this festive time

In sportive frolic dedicate.

Let others raise the loftier rhyme,

Still Home Mythology to the

A simple song shall offer be.

I.—CAROL OF THE CAT.

PURRING, purring, purring, with a soothing dreamy sound,

And half-closed eyes, thou singest as in ecstasy profound.

For joy and rest thy songs seem born, a calm and quiet tune;

Like to a gurgling brook, that serenades the listening moon.

I love thy soft, thy drowsy song, it ever gives me glee,

And Pussy, in return, I'll dedicate a song to thee.

And all to which thy acts are signs from mighty Pharaoh's reign.

Then purr, and purr, and pur, and pur, and pur, and pur again;

Purring, purring, purring, with a soft and dreamy sound,

And half-closed eyes, before the fire, in ecstasy profound.

Thou wastest o'er thy left ear. Ah! to-morrow there'll be rain,

And I have promised with my love to rove o'er hill and plain.

Oh, naughty Pussy, why that sign? thou'rt in an angry mood.

Thou sneezeest! that an omen is that never comes to good.

A cold throughout the house there'll be—a cold, yes, Pussy, a cold.

Thou scratchest, too, my table's legs. Well, that should bring me gold.

Thy better than the miser who some dunghill rakes for pelf,

Ah! thou leap'st upon my lap! that shows thou'lt me for myself.

Purring, purring, purring, with a soft and dreamy sound,

And half-closed eyes, before the fire, in ecstasy profound.

Oh, pretty Pussy! oh, gentle Pussy! purr on, purr, pur, pur;

I'll pat and smooth thy velvet coat if thou, my lovely one

(Last eve when out the candle went by chance), wilt not remark

Whose lips were kiss'd, for well I know thou canst see in the dark.

'Tis no disloyal thing I ask, though there was no one nigh.

I know, though I was sovereign then, I can't thy silence buy.

Thou saw'st the kiss he stole, as low he spoke about the ring;

Proud as I was for, Pussy, thou may'st look upon a King,

Purring, purring, purring, with a soft and dreamy sound,

And half-closed eyes, before the fire, in ecstasy profound.

II.—THE STRANGER ON THE BARS.

[Many fanciful indications are gathered from the appearance of that airy visitor commonly termed "a stranger on the bar," formed by the action of the fire on the smoke, &c. of the coal. If the flake hangs upon the top bar, it betokens a person of consequence; if on a lower bar, his position in life is proportionally decreased, and the expectation consequently lessened. If the flake is of an entire form, without any rent or jag about it, it betokens the stranger will be free from any defect or infirmity; and from the fire burning bright or looking gloomy, a fair conclusion is supposed, may be drawn as to whether the stranger will bring joy or sorrow. Should the coal suddenly burst into a sulphurous or gaseous flame, it is supposed the stranger is military and of an ardent temperament: with a thousand other harmless and fanciful follies. It is usual for young girls, &c., to clap their hands before the flaky flakes, calculating the time the stranger may be supposed to arrive from their falling off the bar. Dark, fragile, and uncertain as they are, it must not be wondered at that these flaky flakes should have been pressed into the service of fireside superstition.]

THERE'S a Stranger on the Bars! which are breathing smoke and fire,
So he's coming from the wars. What's his rank? It can't be higher;
He's on the topmost bar, lightly dancing to my view,
All compact. He has no scar. Ah! my heart is dancing too.
Tall in stature; not too thin. How I love a son of Mars!
Born for victory, still they win. There's a Stranger on the Bars!
Will he bring me joy or sorrow? Will he wake the tear or sigh?
Will he come to-day? to-morrow? Let me clap my hands and try.
Will you come to-day? 'Tis Sunday. [Claps hands.] Though I kneel,
Vain I command.
Let me try again. On Monday? [Claps again.] Ah! he yields him
to my hand.
To my breast he makes a dart. Clear the fire! I bless my stars—
With love's flame he'll cheer my heart. There's a Stranger on the Bars!

III.—FORTUNE IN THE TEA-CUP.

'Tis empty, 'tis empty, I've drain'd the last sup,
Let me try now the power of the crucible cup;
I have put in the sugar, the type of life's jy—
I have pour'd in the cream, peace that never can cloy.
I have put in the black and I've put in the green,
With refreshment and vigour to gladden the scene,
With mystical warmth all their virtues expressing
In the dregs reading grounds of misfortune or ble-sing.
Too pleased, should but hope, while the cup I twill round,
As in Pandor's box, at the bottom be found.
Turn the cup, turn the cup, it our fate will reveal,
Once more, turn again, for thus turns fortune's wheel.
Turn the cup, turn the cup.

Turn it round, turn it round, it will quickly be seen,
By the dregs, if life's aspect looks dark or serene—
Is mix'd or unmix'd, is confused or is clear.
Ah, those leaves close together! then danger is near.
A ring, house, and cradle; young o've should beware.
A drop in the cup! is it comfort or care?
Hold! I see a clear path—it winds through a dark wood;
No stalks cross its progress—it promises good.
All's unravell'd—smooth, fair nought betokens annoy
What is this? it is clearly a purse. Oh, what joy!
Turn the cup, turn the cup, it your fate will reveal;
Once more turn again, for thus turns fortune's wheel.

Turn the cup, turn the cup.

IV.—SNUFFING OUT THE CANDLE.

[Accidentally to snuff out the candle, is an omen that the party so unluckily extinguishing the flame will not be married during the current year. If a spark should be left in the snuffed-out wick, and the party can re-ignite the flame by

blowing on it, the omen may be averted. The candle as an obvious emblem of mortality has in all ages been a great agent in the hands of superstition; witness the winding-sheets, the Welsh corse candles, &c.

Oh dear! I've the candle snuff'd out,
And my heart's overpow'rd with fear;
For I really begin now to doubt
Whether I shall be married this year.
Love may go out, or cease to burn bright,
'Tis a positive omen, oh dear!
Young Hymen his torch may not light,
And I may not be married this year;
No, for young Hymen's torch there's no light,
And I may not be married this year.

But the flame in a breath that may die,
A breath may again make appear;
There's a spark, no my fortune I'll try,
For I long to be married this year.
A rude breath my hope might destroy;
Blow softly, blow soft!—Oh, what fear!—(blows)
It beams brighter!—(blows again)—it lights: oh, what joy!
Yes, I now shall be married this year.
It beams brighter—it lights—oh, what joy!
Yes, I now shall be married this year.

V.—THE FEW MOON.

[Classic lore has delighted in giving the Moon celestial power, assigning it a place in its pantheon under the name of Diana, Luna, &c. Its monthly changes, its influence on the tides, &c., are less mysterious than the power it exercises over the return of mortals. Within two or three years a magazine was written and printed by the patients of a lunatic asylum in Scotland, and published under the title of the "New Moon." The writer has seen one of its numbers: it is painfully interesting; so imperceptible appear in it the boundaries between reason and insanity.]

Good even, New Moon! I lovely Moon! bonny Moon!
Though I see the but half, ne'er eclipsed be thy beams;
To some thou'rt an evil, to some thou'rt a boon—
To some thou'rt the sweet honey month of Love's dreams,
Bonny Moon, but I must not look at thee through glass,
For there should be nought 'twixt my gaze and the sky;
If I did, a dark cloud o'er thy fair face might pass,
Though calm and resplendent thou ridest on high.
Good e'en, new acquaintance, ne'er change but for good;
In thy praise hark the brook murmurs forth a glad tune:
I hail thee, I welcome thee, Moon, as I should;
I curse, I curse, to thee, bonny Moon—
Bonny Moon! Bonny Moon!

My money I'll turn, for thou still canst impart
A charm, bonny Moon, as in bright days of old,
A crucible charm, with alchemical art,
That converts lead to silver, turns copper to gold.
Lovely Moon, bonny Moon! ah! so witching thy sway;
We know not if thou'rt sent for good or for bad.
Thy rule the fierce tides of the ocean obey,
But the charm of thy fair face makes thousands go mad.
Good e'en, new acquaintance, ne'er change but for good;
In thy praise hark the brook murmurs forth a glad tune:
I trust thee, I welcome thee, Moon, as I should—
I curse, I curse, to thee, bonny Moon!
Bonny Moon! Bonny Moon!

Now, New Moon, let me wish, as all should who see thee;
But I'll wish not for pleasures too soon that may pall;
Shall I wish for renown—love—or what shall it be?
No, for something I'll wish that shall purchase them all—
I'll wish—yes, I'll wish, but my wish must be seal'd;
For as I once heard an old village dame say,
No wish will come true that is ever revealed!
Yet, 'tis something most dear; guess it then what you may.
Good e'en, new acquaintance, ne'er change but for good;
In thy praise hark the brook murmurs forth a glad tune.
I hail thee! I welcome thee, Moon, as I should.
I curse, I curse, to thee, bonny Moon!
Bonny Moon! Bonny Moon!

VI.—CAROL OF THE CRICKET.

[If we extend the fanciful *Rosicrucian* system of Count Gobalski, in peopling the four elements with its peculiar inhabitants, we should in the insect world account the cricket as the salamanders and salamandines, being literally creatures that work in the fire. Who had not suddenly heard the song of the cricket, when sitting dreamily in the twilight, and starting as they heard, exclaiming with Shakespeare, "Where should this music be—in the earth or the air?" Leigh Hunt has a very beautiful sonnet on this little insect, whom it not inaptly makes the companion of the grasshopper; and the passage in which Dickens describes the rivalry of the cricket with the louder tea-kettle, must be still fresh in every one's recollection. Before finally parting with the cricket, we should not omit to notice, in reference to the salamandine qualities of its mate, Dr. Mackay's beautiful poem "The Salamandrine."]

CHIRP! chirp! chirp! 'tis the cricket on the hearth,
The herald of sweet comfort, waking thoughts of rest and mirth.
Blest note, though harsh and shrill it sounds, it still to us is dear;
It brings back thoughts of days long gone—of all that then were here—
Of the small faces of our childhood's home once more,
Of the cherish'd social circle time can ne'er again restore;
Though its song may be monotonous, still sweet variety
Lurks in its lively chirp! chirp! chirp! the fairy horn of glee.
Oh! happy, happy cricket, in thy salamandrine bride—
A mate whose voice is never heard, thyself thou well mayst pride.
Chirp! chirp! chirp!

Chirp! chirp! chirp! 'tis the cricket on the hearth:
Its song is still most welcome of the melodies of earth.
We hail thee, merry cricket, for thou'rt loudest heard at night,
When the circle is assembled, and the log is burning bright.
As the grasshopper in summer—the ripen'd harvest moon—
When the sun is shining brightly, chirrups forth a pleasant tune.
Thou tiniest of ventriloquists, whose starting note at night
Still caused our youthful wonder, as we listened, with delight,
Leaping forth from out the centre of the seeming glowing hearth,
In the lapses of the darkness, mingling terror with our mirth.
Chirp! chirp! chirp!

Chirp! chirp! chirp! 'tis the cricket on the hearth:
Our own dear La—our household god—to peace still giving birth!
Thou com'st to us with joy and music on thy sounding wings;
Good fortune to the house good housewives know thy coming brings.
Thy chirp is not the voice of death, go ask the watching wife:
She'll say thy voice inspires her through long hours with thoughts of life.
It luckless is to kill thee, thou darling little thing.
For 'tis but in harmless rivalry thou'rt gaunt all others sing.

We know thy voice will still be heard till the early morning's light—
A watcher through the lonely hours when we have said "Good night!"
Chirp! chirp! chirp!

VII.—WILL IT BE FINE TO-MORROW; OR, THE CAROL OF THE BAROMETER.

[The weather-wise have been found in all ages and in all classes, among the acute observers of nature and pretenders to superior sagacity, a very numerous class. This natural augury, this orthodox divination, as it is daily called into practice, is not very likely to be easily forgotten. The ingenuity of man has invented weather-glasses, and resorted to science and mechanics for the construction of the barometer, &c.; but amongst our very rudest peasantry will be found human barometers quite as infallible, and to be consulted with quite as much confidence, and trusted to with quite as much certainty. The weather has not been fairly treated; in fact, it is in general very foully treated. Who is there that, graved for lack of matter, has not found a friend in the weather? and yet how ungratefully do we use it? We are never satisfied with it: it is either too hot or too cold; still this same weather generally "shapes our ends, rough-hew them as we will."]

Or, be propitious, gentle skies; be fine, be fine to-morrow!
For I am going out—with whom, and where, why mention here?
And should it chance to be o'ercast, 'twill fill my heart with sorrow.
Yes, every drop of rain that falls will bring from me a tear.
If hollow blows the rising wind, how shall I answering sigh?
If low the glass, how will my heart sink at the sight with sorrow?
But no, I saw the sun set red—the bats, too, blithely fly—
The stars shine bright—it will be fine, it will be fine to-morrow!

If mopes the spaniel on the hearth, my heart will feel as dull—
But lightly few the gossamer—from that I'll promise borrow—
The cowslip bells were ill'd with dew, with joy my heart was full—
The beetles flew in circling round—it will be fine to-morrow!

No peacocks scream'd, no donkeys bray'd, the moon shines bright and fair—
No gabbling ducks, no stinging gnats, woke thoughts of future sorrow;
Puss by the fire sat dozing, undisturbing her left ear;

The chairs and tables do not crack! It will be fine to-morrow!

When late, last Lammas-tide, the warning signs we disregarded,
Nor heeded how the trembling fair way'd on the high church spire,
Loud broke the storm, our ardent hopes too justly were rewarded,
Let's hail then the bright omen's dream of gratified desire.
If low the swallows skim the stream—avert it, gracious powers,
'Twill overcloud hope's fairy dream, and fill our hearts with sorrow;
But brightly will to-morrow beam, and strew our path with flowers.
Love will our sunshine double. Yes, it will be fine to-morrow!

VIII.—LOVE SPELLS.

[The great business of life being love, and the ties with which it is bound by marriage, it will excite no surprise that love spells should be among the principal charms by which a knowledge of futurity was sought to be gained. Midsummer Eve, or the Vigil of St. John, in June, and All Hallowe'en, the Vigil of All Saints, at the commencement of November, were the two periods of the year in which these charms were more particularly supposed to be efficacious. The charm of the hempseed is perhaps one of the most generally known of the love spells which have been recorded by the curious. Gay, in one of his rustic pastorals, has enumerated many of these spells; and Burns in his "Hallowe'en" still more.]

'Tis Midsummer-eve, the much-dreaded, desired;
'Tis the mystical eve of the Baptist St. John.
The eyes that watch'd o'er us to rest have retired,
And Midnights draws near—we are now left alone;
Such grace hath the hour 'twill the future make known,
But test we the proof—to the garden let's steal:
Try the spell of the hempseed, our fate 'twill reveal.

Cross we but the threshold and gain'd is the bower,
The watch-dog the steps of his mistress will know.
So holly the season all charms now have power,
The moon shining brightly above and below,
All in turn to some undisclosed influence bow.
With the magical fernseed, oh! we were supplied!
That no one might see as invisibly glide.

Though now they no blessing-fires raise on each hill,
Through which to gain passage, or boldly leap o'er;
Though no garlands are woven, in sign of good-will,
Or the orange or birch overshadowing each door,
Keeping foul things afar, as in bright days of yore;
Yet we'll sow the charmed hempseed, love's secret make known,
'Tis the time, 'tis the time, 'tis the Eve of St. John.

Caution! one the door gently, and forth let us go.
All is silent—fear nothing; the garden gain'd.
Now sow we the hemp-seed, now use we the hoe;
Draw the mould softly o'er it, and all is attain'd;
Panse not, and the wish of our hearts shall be gain'd.
Yes, "Hempseed I sow," yes, "Hempseed I hoe;"
Oh, thou who'st to wed me come after and mow.

Ah! a step! some ones follow—oh, dare I look back?
Should the omen be adverse, how would my heart writhe.
Love, brace up my sinews! Who treads on my track?
'Tis he, 'tis the loved one, he comes with the scythe;
He mows what I've sown—bound my heart and be blithe.
On Midsummer-eve the glad man is won.
Then hail to thy mystical vigil, St. John!

IX.—GOOD NIGHT!—DREAMS.

ALL good Angels hover round me,
Shield me from the ills of night;
In soft chains when sleep has bound me
Let no thought of harm affright;
But let Dreams my fate unveil me—
They will heavenly heralds be
Of whatever may befall me—
Sorrow or Felicity.

Guard me, Angels! Guard me, Angels!

From each ill that may affright—

Death-watch, nightmare, sheeted phantom:

Bless my slumbers. Oh, Good Night!

Let me dream of smiling skies,
Bright pure streams—they'll often be
Of all in life that most we prize—

Pleasure and serenity.

Let me dream of pleasant bells—

Sweet token of felicity.

To every heart where passion dwells

As fondly as it dwells with me.

Guard me, Angels! Guard me, Angels!

From each ill that may affright—

Death-watch, nightmare, sheeted phantom:

Bless my slumbers. Oh, Good Night!

If in the depths of night I wake,

Salute my senses, Chanticleer,

For evil spirits still forsake

The spot wherein they voice they hear.

Let me wake but with the morn—

Day's twitting call to rouse the hours—

The bed's warm hum—the hunter's horn—

The opening bud of early flowers.

Guard me, Angels! Guard me, Angels!

From each ill that may affright—

Death-watch, nightmare, sheeted phantom:

Bless my slumbers. Oh, Good Night!

THE CHRISTMAS HEARTH.

BY WESTLAND MARSTON.

ILLUSTRATED BY FOSTER

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

WHOEVER is acquainted with our northern shires, especially with those that lie near the border, will easily recall long tracts of flat and sterile land, where the sky, unrelieved by hill or tree, seems to hang nearer to the earth than in more favoured districts; and where the wide gloom of night is but more dimly dispelled by the dim flicker in the window of a hut, or the occasional glare of a furnace. The country, it is true, as if anxious for the honour of old England, clothes itself in its better scenery of wood, mountain, and rivulet, as it advances to the Scottish frontier; but, when it falls back into the interior, nothing can be less prepossessing than the every-day working suit of Nature which it resumes. This kind of region is, of course, scantily populated, and boasts as little in its human as in its material examples, of aught that ministers to taste and refinement. The swarthy tribes of the colliery, the mine, and the forge; those whom interest compels to supervise their labours; and a few dealers in necessary commodities, make up the inhabitants. A journey to the nearest town is requisite for the aid of either doctor or lawyer, so that the only resident class we have not yet named is that of the parish clergy.

Few, scattered, and wild, as may well be imagined, is the flock to the charge of which the spiritual shepherd is in these places appointed. Rare and peculiar must be the gifts of a teacher who would here force his way to the hearts of the people. He must be able to translate himself into the facts of their lives, ever ready with calm plain counsel and energetic aid. In a word, the minister who would attach himself to this type of the working man must himself be a working priest. Not a man of this kind (though possessing many virtues) was the Rev. Lawrence Ingleby, curate of the united parishes of Wastmoor-cum-Pitsfield, situated in the centre of such a district as we have described. Hard, indeed, seemed the fate which in dealing with one of the gentlest and most lovable of natures, assigned for its development such a sphere as that of Wastmoor-cum-Pitsfield. But, that our readers may better comprehend the hardship of such a lot, we must acquaint them with some foregoing passages in the curate's life.

Lawrence Ingleby was the grandson of a certain Matthew Ingleby, whilom mayor of a large commercial borough. This Matthew had the good fortune to render an important local service to the Government of the day, and, being a merchant of high standing and some wealth, received for his services the unusual distinction of a baronetcy. The dignity, indeed, sat rather cumbersomely upon the genial and frank disposition of Sir Matthew. Between himself and his once familiar associates he found a barrier of reserve impregnable even by his own good nature. The town clerk, the family surgeon, and the baronet's brother merchants, who had been wont in his snug library to relieve the anxieties of the day by the moderate circulation of the punch-bowl, and the concurrent emission from their lips of tobacco-smoke, lively gossip, and puns unabashed by any consciousness of their badness, suddenly changed their deportment. They still resorted to Sir Matthew's, but only after formal invitation. Their intercourse was grave and constrained, suited, as they thought, to their friend's position. The very ladies appeared seized with the spirit of decorum, and refused to titter in the glasses; the smoke from the "weed" no longer puffed its way in sudden gusts, but stole leisurely upwards, and then wound down again, as if in reverence for the ceiling; and many low-toned hints touching Sir Matthew's leisure were the prelude to partings which closed nights of frigidity and disappointment.

The unambitious gentleman, disengaged by long habits and tastes from invading the circle of "old country families," and exiled by new honours from hearty fellowship with former acquaintances, often bitterly lamented the boon of the Government. Surrounded by his repellent dignities, he was a sort of social prisoner within his own fortifications.

Feeling strongly the inconvenience of his undecided position, Sir Matthew resolved by all means in his power to protect his only son, Marmaduke, from a similar calamity. Sir Matthew had been long a widower, and his whole store of domestic affection was lavished upon his heir. For the boy's sake the fond father rejoiced in the distinction which had been a burthen to himself; and his chief care was to fit Marmaduke, by education, for the rank which he would inherit. The lad was accordingly sent early to Eton, thence transferred to the Continent to complete his studies, and his vocation in life was eventually settled by the purchase of a commission.

The character of Marmaduke turned out widely different from that of his father. The chief care of the son was to have the real service to which Sir Matthew owed his title forgotten, and to ransack or invent genealogies from which some remote kinship to patrician houses might be inferred. Not to dwell on moral features, which little deserve perpetuating, we may briefly say that Marmaduke in due time succeeded to the baronetcy, became a large landed proprietor, and bribed the Hon. Miss Harrowcliff, an amiable spinster of long descent and no portion, to become his reluctant wife. In justice to the lady, however—whose chief deficiency was a want of will to resist—it should be stated that she was persecuted into the step by her impoverished relatives. Two sons were the result of this union. The heir was destined, like his father, to the army; the younger, our friend Lawrence, was early regarded by Sir Marmaduke as a dreamy fool, who would never advance the interests of his family in active life. It was therefore decreed that he should enter the church, and have confided to him the care of souls.

CHAPTER II.

THE FARMHOUSE.

THE qualities of Lawrence Ingleby, which Sir Marmaduke looked upon as sheer fatuity, were an affectionate sensibility and a delicate perception of beauty in nature, and elegance in letters inherited by the youth from his mother. Like her, too, he possessed a degree of conscientiousness and resignation which sufficed to redeem his character from culpable weakness.

Lawrence's career at Oxford, though marked by no brilliant achievements, evinced a keen relish for the graces of classical literature, especially for such as related to pastoral scenes and occupations. The idyls of Theocritus or Virgil were the chosen companions of his walks. Nor could he find it in his heart to deny a corner of it to Anacreon; for, though occasionally staggered by the warmth and jollity of the reckless old Greek, Lawrence would at times sip modestly of his intoxicating cup for the sake of the vine-leaves that wreathed it. So great, indeed, was his devotion to his favourite authors, that to translate them faithfully, and to illustrate them by copious annotations, became the pet scheme of his life at college. On leaving it, his first object (after a brief sojourn in a home of which his mother's love made too only charm) was to discover some seclusion where he might pursue his task undisturbed.

It is thus that blind mortals rush upon their fate. This attempt of Lawrence to secure tranquillity became the very means of its loss. Nothing, indeed, could promise better for retirement than the sequestered farmhouse in Herefordshire, to the tenant of which a college friend, and lover of angling, had recommended him. The shady lanes and gentle slopes of the neighbourhood—the orchard which belted round the garden, whose inner zone of flowers clasped the trellised dwelling-house—the "thick murmur" of bees (which immediately suggested to Lawrence notes for the fourth "Georgic"), and the hearty but respectful deportment of the farmer and his wife to their new lodger, might have been deemed so many pledges for serenity of mind. Alas! in a light wavy form that flitted up the stair as Lawrence passed the threshold dwelt the genius of much future contention.

Caroline Newcombe, the farmer's daughter, meant no harm, not she! In the mental excitement which ensued, she was, like many blithe lasses of eighteen, no wilful agent, but an instrument of fate. Is not every creature what Nature made it? Can the rose reject its own crimson? Is the light responsible because it dazzles? And is it malice aforesighted for light-hearted damsels of eighteen to be charming? Nay, did not Carry for a week avoid any chance that might have led



HOME MYTHOLOGY.—DRAWN BY PHIZ



THE CHRISTMAS HEARTH.—DRAWN BY FOSTER.

[GRATIS.]

her into Lawrence's rooms, and became suddenly absorbed in tending the large fuchsia-tree, if he crossed the walk? Was it her fault that, on the succeeding Sunday, she was caught in a drenching shower, returning from church, and that Lawrence, who carried an umbrella even in the dog-days, offered her its protection, and his arm? Could she help being captivated when, with glowing cheeks and depressed lids, she acknowledged her obligation at the door, and suddenly fled like a startled fawn into the parlour?

It was an impulse of common gratitude, after this, for Carry to see that Lawrence's little study was kept in order. It was an unavoidable accident that he would sometimes enter during her labours for his comfort, and that, after having on two of these occasions beheld her in blind silence, he timorously entreated her on the third not to hurry. Nor was she responsible for the fact that Lawrence shortly afterwards discovered how much more sociable it was to take his meals with the family, and how soothed to him on a summer's evening was a stroll with the farmer, his wife, and Carry, round the garden, or through the orchard.

Carry, by a sacrifice on the part of her parents, had been educated at a "superior establishment," and it speaks well for her that she returned thereto in some degree accomplished and not at all spoiled. Her French accent, it must be granted, was a little modified by good broad Herefordshire; but she could translate tolerably well, had developed a natural talent for drawing, had executed in water colours several flower pieces, which were glorified by frames in the best sitting room, had also learned to embroider, and, to her great credit, performed knitting.

Companionship will lead to talk—talk will reveal good dispositions; and, these once found out, who can help liking them? It was as impossible for poor Lawrence to be insensible to the moral charms of Carry, her kindness, cheerfulness, and simplicity, as to be blind to the attractions of her sparkling brown eyes, and the free outline of a form distinguished in every motion by its agile grace. The danger which he incurred in the society of so winning a maiden was alarmingly increased when, to illustrate his translation, she produced a tolerable sketch of the "wide-spreading beech" under which Titus reclined, and a complimentary likeness to Lawrence himself in the recumbent figure. But the elder festival, which took place in the orchard after the yearly gathering of apples, was destined to complete the young bachelor's discomfiture.

It was the afternoon of a warm September day, the trees had been despoiled of their rich boughs, and the lads had leaned against the green trunks in tokens of a victorious siege. The young neighbours who had helped the good work in the morning now joined in the customary feast and frolic by which their labours were rewarded. An extempore tent was constructed, the sandwiches of which depended from two of the tallest trees. Beneath its shadow was spread a repast of various cakes, new cheeses, nuts, apples, cider, and meat.

Lawrence, fairly enticed out of his shyness by a scene which so reminded him of his pastoral authors, chattered merrily with the group of swains and damsels around him, with a special reference, doubtless, to the ear of Carry. She had never heard him so eloquent. He had never seen her so bewitching. A sweet and deep silence would sometimes fall upon her in the intervals of laughter. You should have seen her too, as her arms sustained above her head by a projecting bough, her fine form tapering to the sword. If, at such moments, she stood like an arrested dream, her ringing voice and buoyant step would soon vindicate her claims to reality. She was attired, too, with a grace and an attention to the niceties of costume which well contrasted her with her kind-hearted but less refined companions. There was a careless dignity in her hat that at once bespoke the rural queen; nor was the little gloved hand unworthy of the hazel-twigs with which she playfully menaced Lawrence, as reclining from the fatigues of one country dance he watched her float through a second. It might be chance, it might be design, that as she did so, revealed to him a perfect foot and ankle, defined by the most charming of *Broderipines* from Cheltenham. For his part, she seemed the very personification of Anacreon's "neat-ankled maid," except that the ivy was wanting to her wand, and that she danced not to the harp, but to the violin. Perhaps it was so vivid an illustration of the bacchanalian poet that induced Lawrence to emulate his precepts by copious draughts of cider. Certain it is, that he grew exhilarated and bold, and that, ere the happy voices of the departing guests had died away, he had spoken to Carry in tones which, if more flushed than theirs, soon indicated a yet deeper happiness. As they wound slowly from the wicket gate to the house porch, their fate was decided—Lawrence and Caroline were betrothed.

CHAPTER III.

A CHRISTMAS-EVE AT WASTMOOR.

THE turnings of our narrative lead us back to the dreary spot whence we started—the parish of Wastmoor-cum-Pitsfield. What has been done, or rather suffered, since our scene shifted, though it took years in experience, may be told in a few sentences. Sir Marmaduke Ingleby, who generally ignored his younger son's existence, became emphatically conscious of it when the secret of Lawrence's wooing transpired. The baronet, though for the most part cold and wary, was on this occasion roused into passion, and under the heaviest penalties, to which he bound himself by oaths, forbade the proposed union.

In vain the mild and startled Lawrence besought, reasoned, and delayed. In vain poor Lady Ingleby, who centred in him the interests of an else stagnant life, endeavoured to play the mediator. As Sir Marmaduke continued to hold that the marriage in question would bring curseless disgrace upon his house, and as his son felt that to abandon it would bring a like disgrace upon himself, no reconciliation was possible. Lawrence, having first taken orders and obtained the curacy of Wastmoor, which was literally going begging by advertisement, united himself to Caroline Newcombe. An annual income of £50 from the curacy, and what occasional help the father of the bride could afford, formed the young couple's sole dependence.

In the course of two years the latter species of aid suddenly ceased by the death of Farmer Newcombe, who left a pittance barely sufficient for his widow. An attempt of Lady Ingleby to assist her son had been discovered by Sir Marmaduke, and, as he avowed that a repetition of it should exclude Lawrence from the benefit of even a posthumous forgiveness in his will, the heart-crushed mother judged it more prudent to desist. Lawrence's elder brother, who had chiefly resided abroad from his boyhood, was now with his regiment in India. The only advocacy, there ore, that could have moved Sir Marmaduke was unavowably withheld.

The young couple at Wastmoor bore up bravely for a time. The sweetness and patience of Lawrence was a fund of passive strength difficult to exhaust. In the elastic and loving nature of his wife, too, the poor curate found a constant help and solace. The courtesy of her husband's habit, and the grace of his mind, so different from the honest bluntness of her former associates, had deeply impressed Carry, and caused a feeling of reverence to blend with her affection. Nor was the contrast less striking and advantageous between him and the sturdy, almost fierce, race amongst whom his lot was now cast. Besides this, Carry had a touch of romance in her character. She never believed that the relatives of one so amiable and accomplished as Lawrence could remain for ever estranged from him. She indulged herself, dear heart! with visions of his restoration to the parental hearth, and gave her small leisure to such studies as she thought would enable her to do credit to him when that happy time arrived. The most common figure, indeed, with which Lawrence presented himself to her mind was that of a prince shipwrecked on a barbarous coast, and only waiting the accident of a passing vessel to regain his dominions. And when she bestowed on him, as her heir apparent, a vigorous boy, whose lungs soon bespoke full capacity to maintain his rights, natural or acquired, the desert island of Wastmoor, as Carry called it, grew very tolerable to those who had been cast upon its shore.

Indeed, during the first five years of Frederick Ingleby's existence he was named after a brother of Lady Ingleby who had died young. The sense of parental delight seemed daily to unfold. It was in vain that Lawrence, after his duties, dipped into the elegies of his favorite poet. There was a fascination in the baby language of alternate exultation which effectively superseded the curate's interest in more serious congees. When, with the coquetry of twelve months, the little Freddy half extended his arms towards his father, and then, shyly retreating hid his laughing face in Carry's neck; when that

sound peculiar to babies—a sound composed of the vowel *a*, with the prefix of an ambiguous consonant—matured at length into an unmissable *da, da*; when, by the boy's use of this ejaculation every time Lawrence entered the room, the latter found it was specially applied to himself, you would have thought his transports had reached their height. But, when the little pedestrian, accustomed to the support of the paternal finger, one morning suddenly rejected that aid, and with a peal of laughter moved rocking and swaying over a sea of carpet to the landing-place of the nearest chair, the ecstasy of Lawrence reached its climax, and the shout emitted by him was so startling as greatly to enhance the peril of the voyage. He was that day proof against fate, and decided at once upon a matter which had cost much anxious discussion—the purchase for Freddy of a hat with an imposing plume which Carry had seen in a shop window at the district market town. He drew with glee the requisite half-guinea from his slender purse, and then wiped away the tears which stood in Carry's eyes as he placed the money in her hand. There was no sacrifice, he observed; it was but dining more frequently on bacon, and avoiding butcher's meat; and Carry knew how partial he was to rasher; so she smiled, and they felt they had nothing to wish for except for a longing on the part of Lawrence, who was deeply attached to his mother, that Lady Ingleby could see the treasure she possessed in her grandson.

But over this calm domestic sky a cloud gathered. *Gathered*, indeed, is not the word to use, so suddenly did it spring up and darken the horizon. In his sixth year little Freddy, as he bounded down the stairs, missed his footing and rolled down several steps to the bottom. The consequence was a serious local injury, threatening permanent disorder of the spine. For a year and a half the little fellow was scarcely permitted to move. The expenses of medical aid and the little delicacies needed by the invalid rapidly diminished Lawrence's scanty income, and he had not only to bear anxiety for his boy, and also for poor Carry, whose health grew visibly affected, but also to contend against the hardships of actual privation. His troubles, though assuaged, were not dispelled by Freddy's ultimate recovery, by the noble and affectionate disposition which he showed as he grew up, and by the rapid progress which he made under his father's tuition. Arrears had been incurred during the lad's illness which would for long remain a burthen upon Lawrence.

Nor was the life of continual struggle in which poor Carry with himself was involved, the only hardship. Painfully sensitive, the poor man was at length haunted by a dread lest his integrity should at last be questioned—lest in the eyes of men disgrace should be added to poverty.

Such had been the state of things for twelve years, when, one gloomy December twilight, an unusual visitor (the postman) knocked at the curate's door and delivered a packet. Opened, its contents proved to be a mourning letter in a strange hand—that of a solicitor informing Lawrence, by his father's direction, of Lady Ingleby's death, and inclosing a bank-note for £10; there was also a letter from the deceased lady herself, whose last request that it should be conveyed to her son had thus been completed with.

It was a long epistle, written under the presentiment of gradually approaching death. It prayed earnestly that Lawrence, after that event, would not cease to believe in the maternal love which had so harshly been denied an utterance. "It was," urged the unhappy Lady Ingleby, "that very love which forced me to choke a mother's impulse. My son, or, rather, that I may say my children," she pursued, "I would have hurried to you in your trials, across seas, over mountains; I would have at least shared with you the little I could call my own; but I dared not. To have done so would have been to cut off the last hope of your father's relenting. Oh, my Lawrence, you will understand the heart that for your sake has borne that you should doubt it! You must know this in Heaven; but even here be pitiful. No, I mean not that be just to me, oh! my son: I deserve it!"

This letter Lawrence read through in silence, only screening his eyes with his thin hand, as if against the bleak light of a solitary candle. When he had finished he pressed his face into both hands. Carry, when she gently withdrew them, saw so tears, but a look so stern, as unlike his habitual one, that she did not speak to him. Lawrence took the candle, and referred to his chamber. He had remained there alone for more than an hour, when some of the labourers at the colliery rushed into the house with news of an accident. A large mass of earth had suddenly given way, and descended upon several of the workpeople with their children. Two men and a boy were killed upon the spot. The remainder, who had sustained serious injuries, were with difficulty brought alive to the surface.

Even under his present grief Lawrence could not delay to visit the sufferers. He returned, however, after a short absence, and with an increased gloom of expression. One of his greatest trials had been the small influence he was able to obtain over his parishioners. The modest hesitancy of his manner, and the somewhat furtive and circumspect language which had become natural to him, was a bad medium for addressing the almost fierce race amongst whom he dwelt. His earnest but gentle appeals from the pulpit, and his household ministrations, had often been met with a sort of ill-restrained contempt, if not with a saucy rejection.

As Lawrence approached the cluster of huts which lay between his house and the colliery, he observed several men bearing a lad in their arms, who had evidently received some severe injury. The sufferer uttered a cry of pain as his rough but not unfeeling supporters attempted to change his position. The curate sprang hastily forward. But his trembling arms were unequal to the task, and a still shriller cry showed how unfortunate had been the interposition. The mother of the boy, who had rushed from the house, turned upon Lawrence with a strain of coarse invective.

"The dافت, helpless loon!" she cried, "that thought himself so much above common folks, he must speak to them in a senseless gibberish at church. Couldn't he keep at home till he was called for, and not wrench the limbs off of honest people's children?" And a sullen murmur from the group expressed their assent to her words.

"Why was I born to a life that is use to any one?" exclaimed Lawrence suddenly to his wife's anxious questioning. She made no reply, but knelt by him; and Frederick, who was now fifteen, rose from his books, and with a look of defiance to slanders in general, took his post by his father's side.

A useless life, Lawrence! to which the charge of two immortals has been given, the one self-trusted by the faith of love, the other a boorish atheist at church. Let no husband or father who pities dear voyagers, relying on himself, a freight of human sympathies and hopes which shall land on eternity, count his life useless! Lawrence felt this uttered appeal, as he looked at his wife and son; the brief bitterness passed from his heart, and left only a chastened sorrow.

It was three weeks afterwards, and on a Christmas-eve, that Lawrence, accompanied by Fred, now his constant associate, had gone to the market town before mentioned, to make some inquiries as to a small legacy for one of his parishioners. There had been a heavy fall of snow that afternoon, and it was quite dark before the father and son, cold and wet, reached their home. But the look of anxiety with which Carry welcomed them was exchanged when they came down stairs, re-apprised, to the fire; for a shy demur look, a smiling rill that overpassed her face.

"Well, Carry?" said her husband with a puzzled look.

Her answer was to dive beneath a heap of faggots in their little parlor-kitchen, and to hold aloft exultingly a brace of pheasants.

Had she exhibited a casket of family jewels, Lawrence could not have looked more astonished.

The mystery was thus explained. An old college acquaintance of Lawrence, who had become a successful advocate, was in the north for a few days on a shooting excursion. Having met with Lawrence's name, he thought that it might readily designate his old friend had occurred to him. Inquiry of Mrs. Ingleby had confirmed his hope. The result was an instant despatch of the brace of pheasants, with an intimation that the donor invited himself to supper that very night.

After reading and re-reading the little note which bore the well-remembered signature of Charles Morton, Lawrence stood for a while with an expression of bewilderment comically pathetic. "Morton! Charles Morton!" he at last ejaculated; and then, as if still incredulous, rubbed his hands with a sort of cautious and sceptical glee. But there was no longer room for doubt when, with the assistance of an active, smiling lass, Carry had fairly got the pheasants upon the broach.

The bright clear fire, the busy murmur with which the jack called attention to the discharge of its duty, and, finally, the delicate and savoury odour that wound through the kitchen, all bore witness to a reality. Lawrence drew his chair before the comforting warmth; and a quiet smile, not untouched with sadness, broke over his face. That he would actually sup from those pheasants was a proposition that was rapidly gaining strength in his mind. But this thought, though sufficiently important and strange, was by no means the bound of his musings. The cheerful kitchen-range, and the fragrance with which the roasting delicacies assailed his nostrils, seemed to transport him to a distant world—that of his boyhood. He remembered, as if it were present, the large kitchen in his father's house, with its cured meats suspended from the roof, the barons of beef that in long ago Christmases had revolved before its fire, and the warm scent of cakes in the oven, which had so often tempted him when a child to invade the domain of the cook. He vividly remembered being expelled from this region, and then he entered in thought the various passages and rooms of the mansion, lingering last in that where his mother used to sit; and then on a footstool at her knee he fancied he beheld Carry and Freddy. He had quite forgotten the tall youth beside him, the constant associate who beguiled him of many a dull hour by discussing with him his favourite classics. He looked not on the lad's face, as it was firmly defined, though lit with intelligence and sensibility; he saw the boy of two years, with his wistful upturned gaze, and fancied that Lady Ingleby stooped to kiss him. Lawrence, thus wandering through a past life, started, almost with a sense of wrong, when a long quick knock awoke him from his reverie. But when Charles Morton entered, grasped him by both hands, and saluted him by his old college appellation of Cordon (referring to him who vanquished Thysus), the curate of Wastmoor was fairly overthrown. This allusion to old and cherished pastimes, in which, except Frederick, a soul had sympathized for years, set in a flood of associations which Lawrence could no longer resist. With laughing eyes, though the tears poured down his cheek, he hugged his friend to his bosom. A calmer interval succeeded. Affectionate and serious for the most part, though occasionally varied with merriment, was the converse of the fireside circle that night. The group did not separate till the bells of the hamlet church broke in upon a pause and warned them that it was no longer Christmas-eve.

CHAPTER THE LAST.

ANOTHER CHRISTMAS-EVE.

NEARLY ten years have elapsed since the Christmas-eve which we have just recorded; but we can no more notice them than do the ingenious painters of moving panoramas the dull scenery that intervenes between their points of interest.

Resuming our narrative, we find ourselves in London, and, turning down an archway in Chancery-lane, we enter that grave temple of civil justice where the Master of the Rolls is wont to preside after each law term. It was a cold clear morning, during the sittings after Michaelmas. A few members of the Chancery bar sat scattered over the benches. Already had the usher prayed silence with a terror-striking frown from which he deemed it his duty to direct towards the green baize door. One of the most affable of Judges had taken his seat after this intimidating prelude; and the "part-heard" cause for the day had been called on.

"Who appears for the defendant?" inquired his Lordship, observing no movement amongst the silk gowns.

"My learned friend, Mr. F—, please your Lordship; but he is engaged in an appeal before the *Exchequer*," replied the opposing Queen's Counsel.

"But the cause was specially appointed for the day," observed the Judge, who, with all his courtesy, was a strict disciplinarian; "if any gentleman is with Mr. F—, I shall hear him."

A junior barrister, evidently wanting some years of thirty, now rose. Notwithstanding his youth, and the comparative rarity of his appearance in court, the Judge turned to him with a gracious inclination. The young man's name had already been favourably known in literature, and his Lordship was a man of taste.

"I appear, my Lord, in the absence of my learned friend."

"Proceed, Mr. Ingleby."

At these words a heavy-built elderly gentleman, in whose face pomposity struggled with querulous anxiety, half started from the place occupied by his solicitor.

This man was the defendant in the suit, Sir Marmaduke Ingleby, the young barrister about to plead for him was his grandson, Frederick Ingleby, the son of the poor curate of Wastmoor.

The advent of Charles Morton at Wastmoor had been a turning-point in Frederick's life. Struck with his manners and talents, Morton never forgot him, and, on a second visit to his father, offered to procure the young man a reportership upon the press, and to receive him into his own chambers. By reporting and literary composition, Fredick had struggled to the bar; and a sound work on the practice of his profession had procured him the confidence of more than one solicitor. Amongst these was the London agent of Sir Marmaduke Ingleby, who little dreaming, from the young advocate's frugal living, of his relationship to the Barone, had given Frederick a junior brief in the important case of *Sanders v. Ingleby*. Sir Marmaduke had only arrived in London the previous day, and, knowing that a distinguished leading counsel had been retained, bestowed no thought upon his second.

The fate of Sir Marmaduke hung upon the issue of that suit. Ostentations and ambitions, he had greatly diminished his fortune, and had almost lost all his remaining wealth in the purchase of a large and imposing estate in his native county. His solicitor had advised him against the purchase, deeming the vendor's title to the estate, though steady honest, not legally secure. Sir Marmaduke, however, was not to be deterred, and became a purchaser, though the conditions of sale included the proviso that the vendor should not be answerable for any defect of title before the property came into his hands. A flaw anterior to that event had since been alleged by a new claimant, whose success would leave Sir Marmaduke impoverished beyond remedy. Will the moralist forgive Frederick for the stern hope that by his talents he might hear upon the man who had cast out his father the weight of a surpassing obligation, that he might snatch him from the flood of ruin, and then have the right to pass on disclaiming his thanks? After a long and cogent argument, the exertions of the "junior" were crowned with success, and Sir Marmaduke was confirmed in his possessions. Leaving court, he eyed Frederick with a look of uncertainty and wonder, and shuffled forward as the latter entered the lobby. But the young man, having turned on him a steady glance, went by without a sign of recognition.

Quicker even than the electric despatch, we dart from London and alight at the curate's house in Wastmoor. He is certainly looking older than when we parted, but his face wears a more than usual serenity; and, notwithstanding Carry's growth in manhood, there is a veiled sparkle in her eyes something like that which, in old times, greeted Lawrence in the orchard-walk. She moves busily, too, about the house; and, whilst her husband admiringly criticises a new green-coat, you see her fit across the floor, and a moment after hear her voice giving directions to her little helpmeet from the upper story. This house is eventually explained by the descent of a portman and sundry handboxes from up-stairs. Carry follows, and when the damsel leaves her alone with Lawrence, casts her arms round him with a warm caress and a look of such mingled love and happiness as it was a luxury to behold—to say nothing of the wearing of it. And they had good cause for joy; the son on whom their hopes were fixed, and for who e'er good they had borne the pang of a long separation, had given year by year new proofs of his affection, had helped them by the consecration and of his earnings, had made their name honourable before men, and they were about to set forth for a few miles to a destination which he had chance to leave unmentioned.

Ah, what life, what health of mind and body, had this good son been to Lawrence! The spirit of cheerfulness and action had renewed itself in his breast. Even the labouring poor around him, though they failed to understand his discourses, had learned to revere the loving sermons of his life. It is true he sighed when he thought how much more suited to their spiritual necessities had been the broad style of practical and homely illustration used by a reverend brother who had

lately officiated at Wastmoor during the curate's temporary illness. "I have not the gift to instruct them," mused the latter; "but they love me." And that thought consoled him.

In the evening of the day on which they started, our travellers duly reached the Yorkshire station, where Frederick waited to welcome them. Fain would we dwell upon the proud and joyful greetings interchanged between him and his parents; but our narrative, which has more than once halted for explanation, must push on, that we may not strain the reader's patience before arriving at our terminus.

The novel and ingenious metaphor which we have just achieved was probably suggested by the succession of easy railway journeys which Lawrence and Carry made with their son to various points of interest. About a week after they had left their home, and on the day which was to end in another Christmas-eve, the party found themselves many a mile south of broad Yorkshire, and entering upon a district where the landscape presented, in gentle variety, fair cottages nestled in their evergreen shrubberies, ivy-crowned terraces, and ledges of brown hills, severed by the railway, and glowing like walls of fire in the clear December sun. The beauty of the scene, the rapid motion, above all, their domestic happiness, filled the hearts of Lawrence and Carry with an unspeakable gratitude that made their faces look like silent hymns. The solemnity of joy in their aspect found a contrast in the exultation which lit that of Frederick. In the course of the day several gentlemen entered the carriage, and the conversation turned at last upon social and religious topics, Lawrence expressing the interest of a pious heart in language which charmed his auditors by its earnestness and grace.

"He would have been understood here," thought Carry, as under cover of her plaid her hand stole to her husband's and tenderly pressed it.

The light was low in the west, and objects began to assume a romantic vagueness. There was something phantasmal in the partial drifts of snow, which several keen though bright days had prevented from dispersing, and in the pools—darkly red in the setting light—over which the forms of many a skater indistinctly gilded. Lanterns, too, were seen on every platform bursting into the carriages with a kind of luminous laughter as they halted. And there was vast unloading of hampers, with voices of eager questioners, and, at times, a gleeful chorus from boys who had accompanied their fathers to meet the Christmas cheer. The spirit of Christmas—peace, faith, and love combined—dwelt in the hearts of the Ingleybes—parents and son.

At last the moment came for them to quit the train. They did so, and entered a carriage which was in waiting for them outside the station. The moon had risen, and, with a troop of stars, crowned the groves which on either side skirted the road. There was purity and awe in the deep stillness which reigned on every side, till one by one the glimmering lights of cottages, or the distant illumination of a mansion, indicated the neighbourhood of a town or village. Soon the lights became more clustered, and the silvered spire of a church caught the eye of Lawrence as the carriage wound into the centre of the hamlet.

They stopped for a minute at a lodge-gate, and Lawrence thought they were about to turn down the avenue which it guarded. But the keeper told them to drive on to the rector, saying that his master, Mr. Morton, would immediately join them.

You would have seen by daylight that the rectory was a quaint solid-looking structure of brick faced with stone. It stood, screened by beech-trees, at some little distance from the road. Passing through the hall, you would find that the rear of the house opened upon a terrace which overhung one of the most picturesque of our southern rivers. The attention, however, of Lawrence and Carry was attracted by the comfortable appearance of the front, several windows in which were lighted as if for expected guests.

The party having descended and entered the house, the *beau-ideal* of a library was thrown open for their reception. The walls were lined with choice books, many of them classical and theological. But enjoyment more immediately tempting were those pledged by a blazing fire, and by a tea equipage upon the table.

Lawrence seemed, as if waiting for an explanation. At length, he inquired, with a smiling embarrassment, "Where is our host? I trust we are not intruders?"

"There are no intruders here, my dear Corydon, but myself and my friend," said Charles Morton, who at that moment entered the room with a stranger, whose bearing and military undress at once denoted his profession. Frederick advanced to him, and greeted him warmly. Lawrence gazed on the stranger's face, as if he had seen it in a dream.

"Lawrence," said the latter, extending his hand, "let your brother, though he has little deserved it, give you the first welcome to our new home."

"His home!" exclaimed Carry.

We have not space to record the broken dialogue, by which it appeared that, through the influence of some of Frederick's seniors at the bar, the living at Fairthorpe, which was in the gift of the Chancellor, had been conferred upon Lawrence. Nor can we detail the circumstances of Major Marmaduke Ingleye's return to England, from which he had been an absentee almost since childhood; nor how he was moved to make himself known to his nephew Frederick, and to investigate the reasons which had so long exiled Lawrence Ingleye from his father's house. Neither can we give any lengthened report of what Lawrence said when his good fortune was explained; for the simple reason that he said so little. After his first amazement had subsided he pressed every body's hand in silence, and suffered himself quietly to be placed in the easy chair. Carry, too, was silent; but, when the last cup of tea had been poured out, she drew near to the fire by the side of her husband, and sat quietly in the corner, her feet on the fender, her hands gently clasped, and her eyes shining through unstrained tears. At length, glancing at her son, she whispered, "Lawrence, he has done it all!"

Some minutes having elapsed, Major Ingleye motioned his brother aside, and after a few words, deep emotion was visible in the face of the latter.

"I never hoped for it," said Lawrence; "but can you doubt my answer?"

Frederick interposed. "Not to-night, not at least this happy night," he exclaimed.

"Would it be happy longer, my son, if we refused?" said Lawrence.

"But when I think upon all the misery which my grandfather's unrelenting sternness has brought upon the parents whom I love,"

here Carry approached.

"And whose best claim to your love," rejoined his father, "was, that they strove to live in Christian charity and forbearance towards all men?"

"But, sir," persisted Frederick, "your mother, whose life his severity embittered and shortened it!"

"Ah, my mother!" exclaimed Lawrence, "wert thou low amongst us! What would she bid us do, Carry?"

"Love and forbear," answered Carry.

"She would, my son," said the minister solemnly.

Never had Frederick so revered him as when he replied, "My father, you are right!"

We do not intend, for the sake of a happy "winding up," to transform Sir Marmaduke Ingleye into an affectionate and generous man. A life of mean and selfish ambition had too far exhausted the moral strength which character needs to rally. But that pitying angel, so loth to see the human heart utterly desecrated, in the last hold of sin, kept utter ruin at bay. The man who had treated his wife so harshly when living missed her uncomplaining patience when he left her. And when, on Major Ingleye's return, to whom all his thoughts had been devoted, he found his eldest son treating him with cold respect, and sympathizing with the banished Lawrence, a sense of desolation and remorse, and a selfish yearning for affection, that was, however, better than selfish apathy, seized upon Sir Marmaduke.

"Take me to your brother," he said to Major Ingleye, whom he could not bear from his sight, and with whom he had travelled to Fairthorpe, remaining at the inn.

Wheels were shortly heard at the gate of the rectory, and Major Ingleye left the room. Before the fire, surrounded by his wife, Frederick, and his faithful friend Morton, stood THE RECTOR. His hand, locked to Carry's, trembles, and his eyes are fixed upon the door. At length it opens, and after Major Ingleye enters a somewhat bent and grey-haired man, who shades his eyes, and looks for a moment dubiously at Lawrence, then totters forward into his extended arms.

Who shall say that the mother saw it not—that hers was not one of the rejoicing spirits at that CHRISTMAS HEARTH?

THE CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL OF FLOWERS.

BY MRS. T. K. HERVEY.

ILLUSTRATED BY GILBERT.

Friends that gather round thy hearth
When the snows envelop earth
Shall have greeting fonder,
If in summer twilight's ye
Musing strayed, and tenderly
In their bush did ponder.

Angel faces Youth beholds
When the veil of Time unfolds,
Though so soon it closes,
Once beheld are known till death;
And on Memory's bosom Faith
Placidly reposes.

Outward beauty then awakes
Human love, and but forakes
That the inward ye are young,
By its passion may create
Griefs rarer than await
Mortal sight's descending.

CHAPTER I.

In a retired dwelling on the borders of Dartmoor lived many years back a man who passed by the name of Paul Corolla. Little was clearly known about him beyond the fact that he was a trader in flowers. Some few whispered that he also dealt in poisons, while others loudly proclaimed him a magician—a dabbler in the black art. The man was, moreover, a collector of simples; and many were the country people who sought the habitation of the flower-dealer for remedies of all kinds. He was, indeed, frequently solicited to furnish charms and spells whose potency was supposed to avail against ills which no human hand could alleviate or arrest—the trial and the burthen of mortal sorrow.

With such a reputation it may well be surmised that many uncanny stories went abroad concerning the man and his pursuits. What most puzzled the curious was, that, instead of the mystery and seclusion which are generally supposed to belong to the dealers in occult sciences, here all was open and undisguised. The house of Paul Corolla was a habitation of the most perfect simplicity. Looking at its plain brick walls, and ordinary-sized windows, its long and slightly-fenced garden, and its spacious hothouse, the most exuberant imagination could scarcely entertain the notion of artifice or concealment. The dress of Paul, moreover, was scarcely suggestive of the necromancer. It was odd, certainly, or, rather, it was somewhat out of keeping with the habits of a trader, and was suited, rather, to the ease and indolence of the successful merchant, than to the condition of a man who laboured with his hands, as Paul evidently did. He generally wore a long loose coat, reaching below his knees, and leaving the exact fashion of his nether garments a matter of doubt. His head, when it was covered at all, which was rarely, was surmounted by a cloth cap, resembling in shape the ancient baronial cap. His hair was slightly grizzled, but not grey; his eyes mild, but searching. His only companion was a negro boy, who appeared to act as his servant, and who was reputed to be deaf and dumb.

One evening, late in the summer, as the twilight of the shortening day deepened and closed, Paul was seated in the little back parlour of his house, as usual, alone. On the table before him stood a solitary plant, in a common red earthen pot. The plant was of that species known to botanists as the *Fraxinella*, or "little ash." As Paul lightly touched its pink flowers and feathered foliage, apparently occupied in studying the condition of the plant, a hasty knock was heard; and the next moment the negro boy showed his woolly head at the door, and, making a sign to his master, ushered in a young man of somewhat disturbed aspect. The youth, who could scarcely have seen more than nineteen summers, had that free, frank, open face which at once prepossessed the beholder in its favour. But his eyes were a look of restless excitement, and his lip quivered with some inward emotion.

As the youth found himself thus suddenly in the presence of Paul Corolla, the calm and unmoved bearing of the reputed magician appeared to act as a momentary check upon the outward manifestation of the passions which stirred within him. He took the offered seat which Paul drew forward, and was about to speak, when, glancing behind, he caught the eyes of the negro boy fixed intently upon him.

"Do not mind the boy," said Paul, noticing his hesitation; "he has eaten of the dumb cane," and at a look from his master the boy slunk into a corner. "Speak!" continued Paul, "what is your pleasure?"

"A moment since," cried the youth, rising restlessly, and turning to go, "a moment since I arrested my steps at your threshold, scarcely knowing whom or what I sought. Your presence has awakened me: I have been a fool. Pardon me, and farewell!"

"Yet, stay a moment," returned Paul, eyeing the young man with some interest. "You sought the magician; remain at least with the host. I do not entice you with the promise of a love-philtre or a charm against the plague; but there are more things in nature than you dream of, and—perhaps—"

Paul stopped; for the young man had reseated himself, and, placing his two elbows on the table, buried his face in his hands. There followed a few moments during which neither spoke. At length the young man looked up. As he did so he started on seeing that the plant which stood on the table before him, and which his bowed-down head had almost touched, was illuminated by a soft, blue light which ran over every leaf and branch. A balsamic odour at the same time filled the room, so strong as to be almost overpowering.

"This is juggling," cried the youth, as he at the same time drew back his chair.

Paul Corolla smiled. "You do not like the light?" he said, and he lifted the plant from the table, and put candles in its place. "Come, I will humour you," he continued. "You dislike my *Fraxinella*; I will exchange it for my sweet gall. These tapers are composed of the wax produced from our Devonshire myrtle; nature's production equally with the other." The tapers were lighted; and again a lifted odour, most grateful to the sense, filled the chamber of the Flower Magician.

"You are no common man," said his visitor, gazing boldly and steadfastly in the face of Paul. "You have bidden me stay—and I have tarried. But what are these shows to me; to me, a man racked in heart and brain? Pshaw! it is child's play!" And a sneer curled a lip beautiful even in its scorn. "Send me forth wiser, stronger, freer than I came, or in Heaven's name let me go!"

"Hark to the cry of the river!" said Paul, as if he had not heard him. "Hark! the Dart is full to-night, and comes roaring down into the valley. You know our saying here in Dartmoor?

River of Dart, river of Dart,
Ever year thou cladest a heart.

What say you? That knell rang in your ear as you took refuge from your own thoughts upon my threshold. Go, fulfil the prophecy of the fool who first uttered it. Go, lest the river should this year lack its victim, and so throw discredit on the soothsayer. You are silent. Shall

I guide your steps rather to Crammere pool, whence the swollen Dart rushes down lusty and strong as breathing buoyant human life? There, it is said, you may mingle your wail with that of the unhappy who fill its drear morasses with their groans."

"You mock me: this tradition—"

"Love itself is a tradition," pursued Paul, his eyes intently bent upon the countenance of his visitor; "so at least you will account it when you have lived to my years: a jest, a joggle, a counterfeited a worn-out tradition, believed in by our fathers, trusted in by ourselves. This is all that I know of it now; yet, you see, I am calm."

"You search deeply: sorceror or not, you read my heart," said the youth. "Know then, the whole, I am reckless, despairing. I loved—I love still, with the hazardous passion of the gamester; of one whose all is staked upon a single die. She whom I so blindly worshipped once vowed that she loved me in return. Now, all at once, without one parting word of peace for memory to starve upon, I am scorned, rejected, banished! From what quarter can comfort come to a wretch like me? Other women have loved, and been fickle: but Alice Cranstone has no heart."

Stirred by the passion under which he spoke, the young man rose suddenly, and paced the room to and fro. But Paul spoke not. A strange cloud—a momentary expression of bitter sternness—passed over the calm face of the man, Corolla, at the last words uttered by his guest. The young man saw it, and, supposing him to be in some way the cause, would have withdrawn somewhat abruptly. But Paul, with restored calmness, said, "It is nothing. Do not go. You are not a boy to be chilled by a passing change of mood. And yet," he added, after a pause, "perhaps you are right. But, if you do not quite condemn me as a charlatan—visit me here again. I have done you at least no harm for this time. Your next coming may, possibly, be more propitious. Your name is?"

"Philip Tremerehe."

CHAPTER II.

As Philip passed from Corolla's door, the negro boy, unnoticed, slipped out after him. An hour had scarcely elapsed before the boy returned to the house; and, having carefully made fast the outer door, crept into the room where his master still stood, rapt in bitter musing, and whispered in his ear:—

"Buckra man go play—so!" and he shook his hand in imitation of the movement of a dice-box.

"Where?" inquired his master.

"Down by de ribber, up by de big house. Many number young mans de: all make merry, smoky, drinky. Dey say Buckra man go by. Dey shout, 'Pheeh, Pheeh!' Massa Philip he go in den: he lose money: he look sad. Nigger boy see him through de window. Young mans laugh. He play again: shake de box—so, like mad! Gor! how him set him teeth!" And the young black showed his own white dumb by way of mimicry.

"Enough—now go; chew the dumb cane, and be still."

But again the knocker was assailed. This time it was raised by a woman in her hand.

"What is your business, my good woman?" demanded Paul, somewhat impatiently, as he himself unfastened the door.

"My young lady is taken badly, sir," was the woman's answer. "My mistress is from home, and belike I may be doing wrong, but I heard you were learned in leechcraft, sir; so, may it please you, just step down, a weary way though it be, and give her a simple."

"And who may your mistress be?" questioned Paul.

"Miss Alice Cranstone, of the Hollies, so please you, sir."

Again a contracting of the brows showed Paul Corolla to be ill at ease.

"Lead the way, then," was his somewhat testy reply; and the two went out along the moors.

The summer night was dark and starless, the moon had not yet risen; no sound broke the stillness of the dreary moorland waste as Paul pursued his way onward—no sound, at least, more earthly than that voice to which he had recently alluded as "the cry of the river." This cry, as is well known, is that louder sound of the water which rises towards nightfall. To-night it rang with more than its wonted solemnity upon the ear of Paul; and while the imagination of his more simple companion beguiled the way with legend of pixey and rock-sprite—the cloven hoof that ascended the lofty mass of the Dewsberry—the black headless dog of the Valley of Plym—the stone circles raised when there were "wolves on the hills, and winged serpents on the lowlands"—the hill 'or, where Satan strove with King Arthur—or the "nine stones" that held their daily dance under the noontide sun—all the while the thoughts of Paul Corolla were with the days of his youth and of his love.

His soul looked through the darkness, and he beheld that same track of moorland as he had beheld it of old—that very ground he had trodien years and years ago. Again, in fancy, the strong spiny branches of the golden ling sprang elastic from beneath his youthful tread; the azure bluebell drooped its head, burthened with beauty; the wild heath rustled, and the herby thyme scented the fresh moorland gale, that died down fainting with sweetness. Paul did not know until that night how young he was still at heart.

Alice Cranstone, the girl whose sick-room he had been thus unexpectedly called upon to visit, lay shivering like one in an ague-fit. As her pale, sweet face reposed sideways on the pillow, Paul gazed upon its almost child-like beauty, and marvelled little at the despairing madness of Philip Tremerehe. Aided by his recently-acquired knowledge of her quarrel with her lover, he divined at once how much of real bodily sickness was here, and how much of disorder was the mind's work. Bodily ill the poor child was, however; and a glance round the room soon served to initiate the Flower Magician into the secret but simple cause of her malady.

"You have wandered far in search of these flowers," he said to her; at the same time lifting from a table near a large quantity of the sweet-smelling, but sickly, *Spiraea ulmaria*. "You found this meadow-sweet sufficiently fragrant, doubtless, or you would scarcely have encumbered yourself with so plentiful a burthen."

The sick girl answered, like one in a dream, "I did not know I had wandered so far—I did not know I had gathered so much—I—I was thinking of something else."

"You believe in charms?" questioned Paul.

The lip of Alice blanched more and more as she responded, "I do not know. I sometimes think that some charm must have power over me, that I am possessed: why else—oh! why else, am I so weak?" and she wrung her hands in sickness of soul.

Paul, who had watched his opportunity, now, while the attendant bad a moment withdrawn, drew from beneath his vest a few sprigs of his favourite mignonette. "Take this, my child," said he; "lay it next your heart. It is the resuds of the ancient, potent to calm and appease all suffering, whether of body or of mind." And, as he bent over the sick girl to place the flowers in her hand, he whispered hastily in her ear, "Be of good cheer! I will watch over your illipil, and restore him to you, if it be possible. I have seen him, and I believe he bears a soul less unworthy than it seems. Take heart, but be silent. And now farewell," he added aloud, "But stay, you must purchase this charm in kind, or it will not yield one half of its proper virtues. I am sorry to deprive you of your favourite nosegay, but you must give me this meadow-sweet to carry away with me; I have a use for it."



THE CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL OF FLOWERS.—DRAWN BY GILBERT.



CHRISTMAS EVE.

And keep yonder window open awhile; the air is heavy with its odour."

A silent look of rapturous thankfulness from Alice, and a stealthy smile on the part of Paul, and the Flower Magician passed out, to tread his solitary way back across the lonely moor. What this short interview with that mere child had cost him; what he had felt, and how he had subdued the emotions that almost mastered him; was known only to himself. The longing of the heart he had felt to fold her to his breast and call her his child; the thirst with which he craved—childless and mateless as he was—to watch over and shield her tender youth from harm, no soul may divine. Few, indeed, could they have known his whole history, could have fully sympathised with him. But Paul Corolla was, as Philip had said, no common man. Early disappointment had wrought nobly upon a noble nature; and, if now and then a momentary strain of bitterness came over him it passed

again, and left him calm and enduring as before—trustful in Nature—faithful to himself.

It was a singular chance, but it so fell out that as Paul turned his steps away from that door-step, full of such hopeless longing of the heart, another mortal creature full of feeling as fervid as his own, and one whose destiny had formerly appeared to be woven with his own too closely for mortal hand to unravel, approached the spot he had just quitted. It was the mother of Alice Cranstone. Strange, indeed, was it that, as that night's moon rose up clear and bright in the summer heaven, they two should stand almost together beneath the same broad belt of light—so near, yet oh! how far apart! Nineteen lean years had sped on heavy wings since that same pair had breathed God's blessed air on that same span of earth. The same heavens—the same stars—were above them as of old; but they two, how were they changed! Each passed on, and knew not the other.

Little wonder was it that Paul had clung to nature as a child clings to its mother's breast: little wonder that he worshipped her—and her alone—in all her forms of wondrous beauty, looking upon her ever as the sole type of the Immutable.

CHAPTER III.

INFORMED with that elastic spirit which seeks and finds "good in everything," and inspired now by a new and engrossing object of interest, Paul began to experience an increased relish for life. He seemed to feel at last that he stood not quite alone. Human sympathies, which alone he had lacked, and, wanting which, even the exhaustless resources of Nature herself were insufficient fully to satisfy his being once more stirred within him. His whole thoughts were centered upon Alice and her lover. All the energies of his mind he determined to devote

to the accomplishment of one end—the reformation of Philip, who he rightly conjectured had been discarded by Alice on account of such habits and companions as those in the midst of which he had been discovered by the acute West Indian. Philip Tremenheere was yet very young, and Paul felt hopeful that to induce him to relinquish his present companions and their evil influence he needed only the substitution of some other stimulus—required only to be led by gentle means to engage in some better and wiser pursuit. All things appeared to favour his plan. Philip had lost little time in renewing his visit to the Flower Magician. Struck by the originality of Paul's mind, he sought him again; and again; at first merely to satisfy a restless curiosity, or perhaps, with some latent hope of deriving counsel and aid from one whose frank and cordial bearing was so much in unison with his own. He soon, however, grew to like the man Corolla; and it was not long before a firm friendship sprang up between the two—a friendship rare between persons of different ages. But, though he had numbered more years than his companion, his mind, in acquiring its full vigour, had lost little or nothing of the freshness of youth. The greatest good promised to result from their intercourse. Not only did Philip find himself irresistibly drawn to adopt the same modes of thinking as his friend, but Paul was soon able to lead him to enter heart and soul into his own tranquil pleasures. Vegetable chemistry became in a short time Philip's most engrossing and absorbing pursuit. Night after night, the two might be seen employed together in the small laboratory into which Paul had converted one of the rooms of his house. Here, while Paul was busied in preparing decoctions of the various medicinal herbs and plants which grew in abundance about the neighbourhood, Philip would, perhaps be sitting, the blowpipe in his mouth, producing with the aid of Nature's magic, a colourless glass, by the simple fusion of a wheat straw.

Thus passed the remaining months of summer; and autumn drew on, ripe with its burden of fruits. Meanwhile the fame of Paul Corolla had spread itself still further abroad, and people began to come from far and near, to see and judge for themselves what manner of man he was. Many burthened with some soul-disease, true believers in that lore which taught that the simplest wayside flower may be administered for "the comfort of the heart, and the driving away of sorrow," sought him for his simples. Others openly implored him to draw hence, by any means, the internal enemy of their peace, whose presence maddened and rendered him a hell.

One night, when Philip had left him, and he was about to relinquish his labours until the mowing sun, Paul was startled by an apparition as singular and unexpected. At the moment when the negro boy was in the act of closing up the house for the night, a female figure, closely veiled, slipped past him through the open door, and entered at once unannounced into the presence of the Flower Magician. The manner of her coming struck Paul as that of one whose courage to encounter the reputed necromancer had failed at the last moment. Its mysterious visitor remained standing in the shadow of the room, and seemed to gaze past rather than at him. It was impossible to trace her features; but the fine sound of her voice thrilled through the soul of Corolla, and sent the blood bounding through heart and brain like the rush of the Dart river.

"I am here to seek your aid, Paul Corolla," she said. "Not long since you rised from sickness to health one whose love is my solitary good and blessing. Whatever spell you called down on her, it was potent to heat and save, and worked as a miracle, swift and strong! Is the magician of these moors equally skilled to cure these maladies of the soul which waste its mortal frame to a shadow, thus?" and she raised from beneath her mantle hands

So wan and transparent of hue,
You might have seen the moon shine through.

"Behold these wasted hands," she continued, "and judge what my malady must be. The sickness under which I suffer is in my brain; upon my heart; I am consumed with the constant pressure of one haunting thought—the constant recurrence of one miserable dream. One face, one form known and loved in early youth, is ever before me. Nothing can free me from it. As surely as the night comes, as surely comes this dream—this nightmare of the heart. During my one short year of wedded life, the very thought was banished as a foolish thing; but no sooner was I free than back the haunting shadow came, more constant, more terrible in its unsought presence, because once so forcibly shut out. I strive against it; I battle with its despair; in my waking hours I task myself with books; I labour with my hands; I go abroad into other scenes. All is unavailing. Speak! What can you do for me?"

Breathless, and exhausted with the passionate energy with which she spoke, Paul saw that strength failed her. "Take this," he said, while he poured from a phial an infusion he had just prepared. As he did so, he contrived to change his position, so that the light should not fall upon his face. His voice was husky with emotion, and scarcely needed the effort he was evidently making to disguise its tone. Something in his manner possibly struck her as singular; and for a moment she hesitated to accept the offered draught.

"Fear not to drink," he said, "the infusion is simple; an ancient remedy, sacred to the memory of its discoverer, Genius of Illyria. Its virtues are alike prized by the hardy Swiss, and the more feeble natives of our West Indian Isles. Have faith, and drink."

But the cup fell from her hand. "That you have visited those far-off lands, I know," she cried. "You are said to have spent a life there. Tell me where—in which of those distant islands you have been a dweller?"

"In the 'Island of Humming-birds,' as we call it there," answered Corolla. "You know something of it?"

"Trinitarian!" And she drew closer to Paul, not a word, a breath of his should escape her. "It is a vain, vague hope, I know," she cried, eagerly; "yet it was this hope that half lured me hither. Can it be? is it possible that you should ever have met one who lived and died there?—one who—his name was—" But she could not utter it.

Taking a letter from a drawer, Paul tore off the signature and placed it before her, saying quietly "That was the man."

Florence Cranstone—for it was indeed the mother of Alice—did not start or faint. But her eager ear clung to his words. She believed him to be a magician, now, in truth; and, filled with a degree of awe that held her spellbound, she motioned with her hand for him to speak further.

"I knew him well," he said, "none better. He was my second self; he had laid bare his innocent heart before me. He had been early disappointed; but he learnt to bear the ill like a man. He had loved and wooed among these very moors. Lovelier to him was the fierce mountain storm, sweeping yonder moorland ridge, than all the glowing, sunlit grottoes of those islands of the West; dearer to his ear the burr of the wild plover's wing, than the flutter of plumes flashing like living gems through the tropic air. But he is at peace; what would you more?"

"Nothing; my soul is satisfied!"

She turned to go; but Paul arrested her step on the threshold.

"Yet a moment stay," he cried. "To one haunted as you profess to be, such comfort as I have given is little. What if my power extends farther? Are you prepared for all that it might reveal to you?"

"Ay, ay, g—anything of him! But oh! what can bring rest to the one miserable, torturing thought, that he died—died, lonely and forsaken, never knowing that I too was betrayed even more drearily than he? How?—Slendered?" exclaimed Paul, in a tone that made Florence Cranstone start, and sent a knell through her heart like a voice from the far-off grave.

"Even so. They told me he had wedded. That falsehood was proved—too late!"

"Too late?" returned Paul, as he sprang to her side. "Too late? Never, never while there is life and truth, is love too late! Florence, my Florence, my own lost love!" And Florence Cranstone fell like one dead upon the strong heart of Paul Corolla.

On Christmas morn, in olden times, though snow lay on the ground, and icicles hung by the wall, the minstrels went their round; And sang their carols, warning maids and mistresses to rise Betimes upon that holiday, and bake the Christmas pie.

Nor was the warning lost, I ween; for, though the day before

The pies had been already baked, there wanted something more

To grace the board upon that day—plum-puddings, custards too;

Besides the huge sirloin to roast, they had enough to do.

The dinner o'er, the grace-cup served, round went the wine and ale,

And jovial grew the company—one told a merry tale,

While others sang a roundelay, until the sprightly sound

Of music warn'd both great and small to dance a merry round.

Sir Reger led my lady out; the young 'squire danced with Sue,

The bonny, buxom dairymaid; the parson he danced too.

Now in, now out, they jigg'd about, each Jeannette with her Joe;

And all the maids again were kiss'd beneath the mistletoe.

England was merry England then! and still we've "cakes and ale;"

So at this season, as of old, let honest mirth prevail,

And let the wassail-bowl go round, and sing with heartsome glee,

"Since Christmas comes but once a year, we'll merry, merry be!"

STEPHEN OLIVER.

CHAPTER IV.

Were this a tale of younger loves it might well close here. But the shadows of a life like the moorland mists, not to be swept away with one light breath, or curled heavenward at the first call of the sun. So heavily did the past still press upon the memory of Florence, and so difficult did she find it to realize the strange change which had fallen upon her life, that she yielded to an impulse it was impossible to control, and for a time almost entirely withdrew herself into the seclusion of her own home, to ponder upon the present, and gradually accustom herself to the contemplation of the possible future. Unsatisfactory as this was to Paul, he made the less opposition to it, since he saw clearly that nothing but entire repose of mind was likely to restore that healthful state of being without which life is but a burthen to its possessors. Out of themselves, too, and apart from their own individual cares, they had each sufficient food for thought; and plans for the happiness of Alice and of Philip soon engrossed them both, almost to the exclusion of every other object.

Winter had now set in, and was drawing on with swift pace. Rimey frost sheathed the thorned spikes of the golden moorland gorse; and silver snows deepened on the hills. Vegetation became scant about the rock-bound pastures; and solitary sheep tracks mapping the upland ridges showed blank and bald along the fair white alps. Cattle sought the shelter of leaf-bare boughs; and the stone-chink and the water-ouzel hid themselves away in clefts of the unknown rock. The year was indeed in its wane, and Christmas, with all its gracie and hallowed associations, was at hand.

And the genius of Change, which showed itself everywhere, took new forms of wonderment in and around the dwelling of the Flower Magician. If before he had been accounted a necromancer, on the bare evidence of men's superstitions, what now was likely to be the gossip's tale, when at length a show of real and tangible magic was presented to their eyes?

When first the winter came heralded by storms to the inhabitants of those wide-spread moors, numerous workmen—evidently brought thither from a distance—were seen busily employed about the domains of Paul Corolla; altering, enlarging, glazing and roofing, dismembering and transforming hothouse and garden, homestead and orchard. No expense appeared to be spared in forwarding the work, whatever that might be, which was there going on, filling all at once with the sounds of busy, day-life the first quiet precincts of the magician's home. And, as one prevailing idea is sometimes driven out by another, so Paul's former reputation as a wizard was suddenly forgotten; and, in place of the old tradition, he now came to be regarded as a miser, or an alchemist! Whence, if not from some such source, could all this sudden exhibition of wealth arise? Loaded wagons made their appearance day by day; and what added to the mystery of the whole was, that these were never unpacked until the early winter sunset screened their contents from view. Still, enough was visible to the eyes of the curious to fill the mind with wonder. As if touched by the wand of a genius, the wizard's domain became in a short time transformed into a scene unsurpassed in the realms of Faery. And as the gracious Christmas-tide drew nearer and nearer, there arose a structure so rare, so delicate in its design, so beautiful in its choice adornments—little wonder was it if the simple inhabitants of those sequestered hills lifted up their hands in awestruck wonder and bewilderment.

At last dawned the eve of the great winter festival of the year. And did Paul, the lonely liver, the man without kindred and without friends, do he become all at once a man of the world, a mere hollow guest-receiver? Not so; the Christmas feast of Paul Corolla was characteristic of the man. He caused it to be given out far and wide that the Wizard of the Moors would throw wide his doors on that most blessed festival of all the year to the poorer inhabitants of his native wilds. The moorland children were to know what a Christmas feast-day meant for once in their lives.

Wide flew the gates. And what a scene of enchantment opened from within upon the delighted sense! Stretching away through far vistas, trellised over with the creeping foliage or the violet bearing ivy, rose pillar after pillar, clasped by bunched branches of the hundred roses of China. Groves of evergreens swelling the long-suspirited oaks sprang out with glossy boughs of viburnum, rest as if newly roused from the classic ground of Mount Atlas. Fine scented paracanthus and the ruddy winter cherry vied with the ripe red berries at the point d'by. There, too, was seen, in wild profusion, the fragrant Christmas rose—the fabled love-avenging shrub of Anticycla; while the alant and the palmar, with many another plant of wondrous growth that adorns the bountiful earth, spread here their various gifts—ministers to the one great season's joy; till the pulse of the full human heart thrashed with a love of the beautiful, and soul and sense were satisfied.

Down every alley were ranged benches groaning under a weight of the good old Christmas fare. These the sips and the madden, seen withdrawn in its fading; and rosy childhood in its bloom, youth in its jolly unbold age in its repose, all shared that Christmas-mass in the winter's fair bower. Nor was the poor black boy forgotten amidst the joy of the "pale faces."

There, unstrayed Alice with her Philip, severed now no more. The good-bred bridle to the point d'by. There, too, was seen, in wild profusion, the fragrant Christmas rose—the fabled love-avenging shrub of Anticycla; while the alant and the palmar, with many another plant of wondrous growth that adorns the bountiful earth, spread here their various gifts—ministers to the one great season's joy; till the pulse of the full human heart thrashed with a love of the beautiful, and soul and sense were satisfied.

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that produced her, though she dreads to return to transatlantic shores, the shame of freemen who respect not freedom. No longer in nave or trans-pit, aisle or gallery, shall bust of poet, sage, or hero, or statue of god or demi-god, Amazon or maiden, man or animal, or group of sculptured figures in harmonious combination, compel the spectator of taste, despite the Horatian precept, to admire. The kingdoms of the world, each represented in its compartment, have remanded their several quotients from this grand array, not of arms but of arts. Here we had the nations of the East and the West, of the North and the South, all compressed into separate spaces, and forming portions of the World's Palace—the world's epitome. No more the multitudes of all peoples may be seen from that far gallery delving, a sea of heads, along that wondrous nave—a countless number of admiring, marvelling men, women, children—all conscious of a miracle in the magnificent edifice and its gorgeous contents. Believe they in its permanence? or is its speedy doom even now spoken? Have they melancholy forebodings? Is then, the earth so poor she may not sustain for long so costly a burthen? Is she still mendicant, and this her palace-temple, once divested of its treasures, but her idle offspring, to be discarded like a beggar's brat? Look we then again on the picture—Christmas-eve!

Contemplating afresh that melancholy sister, who can help thinking that she, were she depicted as somewhat older and matronly, with her basket of sticks gathered from the hedges in the suburbs, might stand a fitting symbol of our great mother, the Earth—this sad world which we have hitherto done so little to enrich, so much to impoverish? That Crystal Palace, whose removal has been threatened, serves to show of what she is really capable—what man may make of her *matériel*—how much, indeed, has been made, and to suggest how much more might be. Some of her ungrateful children, however, start back, as if alarmed at the aspect of industry, and what should be venerated for its beauty repudiate for its terror. Privilege would plead for its own indolence, and not recognise too suddenly the claims of the Worker. It talks of reaction, and already prepares resistance to progress, as if “the good time coming” could come too soon. Why should it not come to us? Why should it be deferred to our posterity? With what glorious garniture might we, even we, here and now, invest this seeming pauper-earth, if free way were given to Diligence and Genius! How might she be presently robed and crowned! What gems, what flowers, to make an Empress of her, who long has appeared a widow, while evermore of her best son—

—
Seem'd shed upon the universe, and grief,
Dponent of its separate sadness, clung
To the stupendous dolor of all things,
And wept with the great mourner.

Why should the Reactionist dread the expiatory sorrow of a Kossoff? and deny to “the august maternity” of Rome the long-expected day of her deliverance from superstition and misgovernment? Why will they not aid to unbind

Andromeda? She was not born
To stand and shiver in the northern blast,
Or to ter in a foreign rock, or bear
Rude license of the unrespective waves.

Recovered from the marvel reverie in which the reminiscences of the Crystal Palace cause the soul to slumber, who confesses not, in the expression of the highest hopes for the world's future, measured by his capacity, that each becomes a Dreamer? Ay, but that which is one

man's dream is other men's work. In those, the labours of many hands that so lately filled those Crystal halls, were the dreams of many heads embodied—and now that they have vanished, in fancy, are they transfigured back into dreams. Such are the mutations and the relations of thoughts and things. “Thoughts speculative” and “certain issues”!

Future utilities belong to that magnificent edifice, and more particularly to the idea in which it originated, if suffered to remain or to prevail, and to be duly occupied or realised; if not, that pauper mother's beggar son not more idle, nor more useless, than either. It lies in destiny, whether further account shall be made of them or not. So likewise of him. Such a proportion of the populations of the great cities of the earth must be as he, without employment, without subsistent means. What individuals shall compose that proportion, depends more on fortune than on virtue—on accidents of birth, position—accidents of all kinds—and sometimes, but rarely, on volition. While full of the world's gifts, that Crystal Palace resembled Intelligent Labour actively employed; now emptied, it resembles the would-be-labourer refused the privilege of work. For, to the mendicant and the criminal, it is a privilege refused. Enough of food and clothing has been raised without their aid, and might be theirs to appropriate, had they but the means to purchase; these they have not, and therefore must obtain those without purchasing, which, by other means, legal or illegal, to a cert-in extent, they do; and then what is left over, and much does, perishes for want of weavers and eaters. But, whatever statists assert, the mind refuses to acknowledge a moral necessity in this condition of things; and still, hopes, that by the better distribution of means and produced wealth, every appetite may be satisfied, and every back that now goes bare may be covered. The destiny that coerces is but the will of the powerful minority in states and churches; and, if those that govern were to will it otherwise, the requisite distribution might be readily accomplished. It lies equally in such will to decree that the Crystal Palace shall still continue the Temple of Industry; and that the children of the mendicant shall no longer beg, but work—no longer breathe only, but live.

That “the poor shall never cease from the land,” is not Heaven's decree, but man's. And some of the elect among men have seen that the case is so; but their efforts avail not yet. As yet, it is but the happy world's vigil—the Christmas-eve of time.

Every idea, however, is prophetic of its own realization. Even so is this. To-morrow what is now but conceived shall be begotten. The advent of thought and of deed—the nativity of the heir of time—the festival of the great birth—these belong to to-morrow. To-night the chill wind pierces to the bone the unprotected and the orphan—through partly cheered, it must be confessed, by the signs of coming festivity. To-morrow they may partake the joy of the day. Some “stray pleasures” may find their way to them. But to-night the bitterness of the cold without is enhanced by the sense within of right denied; the melancholy fact of labour having become a personal privilege, granted to many, but refused to him who would but cannot, being forbidden or prevented.

That destitute lad, so helpless in his destitution, would work, could he but find it, and were he capable of it; both, hitherto, have proved impossible to him, and may to his dying hour. Many have so lived, so died; but, as we think, things shall not take this turn much longer. And here it is that this world's Christmas-eve—this entire year that we have passed—has been to some a year of fearful omen, as well as to others a year of hopeful promise. The former would preserve continental tyrannies and French Presidencies, to avert, or delay for a while, the inevitable change. Louis Napoleon would make common cause with them; but, to secure the result, must, nevertheless, call on Universal

Suffrage, and conciliate Red Democracy. Strange union of means and ends—not insignificant, as we take it; and its significance may be read by those who are not over wise—by a Sulthorpe, as by a Palmerston.

Meanwhile, these vain terrors of the tottering, mighty serve to prolong the period of transition, and to intensify its peculiar pain. War has not yet been declared wholesale murder; nor capital punishment manslaughter in detail. Carnage and Victory, mounted on battle coursers, and decorated with honours, still triumph, and crown Death with glory on the field of groans. Nay, in the streets of cities, they have had hecatombs of victims, desecrated palaces, and pillaged temples. The Eagle yet is despoiled in Gaul. The Lion in Alzian is yet blatant for Boudhish; and the nations of the world await the hour of his slumber, that they may arise and slay. Alike despotism and freedom yet appeal to the sword. Fraud and violence, still hand in hand, range over the globe to despoil and subdue. The desert crieth out with a voice and the finger of the Arab pointed—

To the caverns of the dead—
To the grots of Dakara.

And yet the terror of the massacre fills the soul of the Kabyle, and the tribe of Ouled Riab excutes the name of Pelliisser. But a voice from the Punjab also arises, and the waters of the Sutlej are red. Frank and Sikh, with the war steel, he confuses on its banks, and murmurs are heard in Lahore: “Thus British rules in the East; and of her Christian people the sceptre is ‘swept away.’” Ah, surely the God of battles, Mars or Odin, should no longer be worshipped, by those who would teach the Mahomedan how to live! Even on this Christmas-eve his ascendancy is disputed; to-morrow hope we that it may be subverted. Not in vain lived William Ladd; and in vain exists the league of universal brotherhood; and the olive of peace shall ere long supplant the laurel that enwreathes the victor's brow. Other and better conquests shall succeed, which acknowledge the dove for an emblem, not the eagle. And then shall we turn from the gibbet to the cross; and, like him who there suffered, “desire not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn from his wickedness and live.”

The law of development shall succeed, even though ancient prejudice should decree the removal or destruction of the Crystal Palace, or suffer it to remain idle and empty; even though it should deny to the ragged wehkin and the untaught girl the right of labour and the privilege of education, which makes employment facile.

Awake, spirit of Wordsworth, and in that poor boy's immortal soul recognise a Crystal Palace of divinest possibilities.

What laurel'd impotent shall show his head
Beside that uncrown'd giant?

Thank the merciful and ever-provident Heavens, already the poor and the ignorant are taken out of the hands of old and fatuous privilege; already to-day is the vigil of a happier morrow.

To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to morrow,
Creeps in this patty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time,
And all our yesterday's have lighted fools . . .
The way to dusty death.

Let it be no longer. Let us no longer be fools, so easily led by the past, and declare at length Harvest Home. It is time—it is full time. Even on Christmas-eve we may be charitable, and might be, if we made not too much account of the morrow. Even on this vigil we have duties; and, in the midst of our preparations for a happier future, we should respect the present. Let us work while it is to-day; secure now our own happiness, and that of others. Benevolence neglects nothing, scorns limitation, and looks abroad as well as at home. Let us on Christmas-eve be studiously charitable, and thus entitle ourselves to be merry on Christmas-day, and happy for the whole of New year ensuing.

* We have been much helped in these reflections by a little book of “Peace Lyrics,” by H. G. Adams, laudable both for poetry and sentiment.

ADONIS AND ADONA.

A TALE FOR CHRISTMAS.

THE AUTHOR OF “THE PLEASURES OF GENESIS.”

ILLUSTRATED BY THOMAS.

PART I.

CONSCIOUS waves, astutely,
Rippled, tumultuous surging;
—By the seashore, mostly
Sate the lonely Virgin;
While thy murmurs, Ocean,
Sported with the breezes,
Music of their motion
Making—such as seizes
Spirits when they feel inspired—

Thus sitting, unadvised,
To wash the foam Adona seem'd,
While it mantled, roll'd, and cream'd.
Its spray once shed, 'tis shed for ever,
Flowing away, returning never;
And where it brake, and tumbled o'er,
Another still, for evermore,
Grows to a ridge, and froths and frets,
And mists to vapours, all retires
Forestalling for the passing, by
The coming—born with ecstasy,
In endless series, like a chase—
Each eager for the former's place.

In maiden meditation, she
(Adona) sat; and, fancy-free,
Felt like a weed upon the shore,
Flung from that sea, unclad, forlorn.

What mortal, girl with regal west,
Crown'd with the myrtle for a crest,
With spriggy step, now sets the leg,
As plodded with sand, and sky, and sea?
Who knows him not? Adonis—he
Who is—just what he seems to be—
The glorious Monarch of the Isles
(O happy land! O joyous troop!)
That bask within the sunnier smile,
And make with this a sister group.

What stays his step? In mute amaze,
That maiden shape arrests his gaze,
—But, as he look'd, a darkness lour'd,
And shadows deepen'd on her brow;
With terror or with shame o'erpower'd,
She turn'd to flee—but where, and how?
She turn'd to flee, but, worn and weak,
Sank on the beach, and could not speak.
Then, in thy heart, Adonis sprang
Pity, and, like a faint, in-sang,
A soft and clear and silvery song,
Running its pebbly bed along,
Which, save in stillness and in shade,
No sound unto the ear had made.
That royal soul the whisper heard,
And, soon to love by pity sturd,
The Monarch scanned the maiden's face,
With marvel at the expressive grace
That lie to every lineament
Significance and lustre lent.

Then words he spoke, to soothe and cheer,
And heal'd her soon of shame and fear;
And heard her simple tale, in part—
The rest he guess'd at, by the heart.

* On some far isle, hid in the deep,
Couch'd on a book of flowers asleep,
A pirate crew, with purpose dark,
Had seen, and then on board their bark
Conveyed her, meaning to enslave:
Pursued, they toss'd her to the wave;
And hither, driving with the tide,
Alike like a curse than living creature,
The billows bore her, in their pride,
Uninjured or in form or feature.”

Her voice, her air, the Monarch moved.
He look'd, he listen'd, and he loved.

PART II.

On golden throne, in marble hall,
Adonis sits Adona by;—
It is a day of festival,
Of masquing and of revelry.
Adonias they call the day,
Whereon who would might idly play,
And sport his jest, and boast his say,
Fyllow his face, and have his way;
There was none to chide with nay—
The world was a fair, and all were gay
Ever at this Adonis.

In royal robes the bride was seen
Adona—all-enthral'd Queen.
Beside her, and o'er her above,
An image of immortal Love,
Adonis, with his eyes of fire,
Lit up in hers his own desire;
And, while her cheeks with blushes glow'd,
Her beauty awed the ignoble crowd.
There was his sisters, their shrines;
And in the worship was divine.
—The like of himself he saw,
And in the mirror look'd with awe.

And, thus carest, and worshipp'd so,
The woman to a goddess grew,
And greater felt than she might know—
The lovely and the deathless too!

Her eye of pride Adonis read,
And fill'd with more of love than dread.
Exulting said:
“Now, by the Sun!
Whate'er thou wile,
That shall be done,
Or grace or guilt—
Speak I have thy will, my goddess-bride!”

* I see the wine-cup by thy side,
The liquor mantle to the brim,
The beads upon its surface swim,
Each globule is a world of pleasure,
They run a race, they dare a measure,
And, like the pheasants in the sky,
Have their own stellar harmony.
Merrily, merrily the dimples laugh;
And fair—how fair—would I the goblet
Quaff!

A gloom upon Adonis fell—
“This goblet wouldst thou taste? ‘Tis well!”
The shoulder'd it from to the lip,
An each once now'd who da revole?
The daylight he shew'd; I will not tell
The magic char'c, the wizard spell,
That migh—there, lest thou shouldst lose
One joy, and deem that I release.
My love to me is more than life—
My mistress, bride, my queen, my wife!”

Then in his arms Adonis took
Adona, and upon her lips
Impress'd a kiss, and shud a look
Into her eyes, they scarce might brook,
Bright as the sun's ere his eclipse.

This done, for Love had made him brave,
The wine-cup to her hand he gave,
And smiled well-pleased—so best might be
Her bosom of all doubt set free.

Within her small white hand
Adonis took the cup,
And hild it to her lip so bland,
Then drank the red wine up—
O the rapture! sh. a tremble,
She the joy would fain dissemble;
When, from her unsteady grasp,
Escaped the bowl, and said nill—
Oh, late 'twas wh. in, within her claspl—
Now, broken, to the fragments tell—
What? that Adonis loved too well!
He knew, not she, the oracle.

PART III.

* When the bowl shall be broken,
Ere the rite can be spoken,
On the Death-loss the deadly shall be ywoken!
—These were the words the Flamen aloud
Exclaimed, advancing before the crowd
Into the presence.

The sound appall'd.
Adona's sense were all enthrall'd,
And pale she stood in the midst of throngs.
Ceased on the sudden their sports and their
songs,
While the stern Priest said, in the silence
dread:—

* One moment, and religious wont,
With ceremonial order fitting,
Had taken from the holy font,
The while your hands in bonds were
knitting,
The sacred chalice, and to thee
Presented it with sanction free.
But thy impatience has outrun
The pious rite, and evil done,
That had been good, had the form been so—
Wherefore the bridal we forego.
Wake from thy trance, too much adored
Adona! look upon thy Lord!”

Obedient now too late, thus chil,
As she was bid, Adona did;
And look'd upon Adonis, whom
Some horror seem'd to wrap in gloom.

It pass'd, but left within his eye
A wildness, as of phrenesy,
And with his trembl. g. lips there came
Breathing thoughts and words of flame,
Like the levin from a cloud.

* To the chase! to the chase! he cried aloud;
“The deep-mouth'd bay of the hounds I hear!
The sound in my soul is a sound of fear
For they are the hounds of hell, I wis,
And their prey they never miss.
Ere which I snare they pass not?”
They goad the boar to his und—
Hold back! hold back! Oh, fatal zeal!
His tusks within my side I feel!
No rescue! none! By Heaven's decree,
Adonai thus I die for thee!”

While thus he raved, his visage, act,
In agonistic gestures fit,
Sibyll'd to every sense the fact,
His dead—designed, performing it,
And when he ceased to speak, he fell,
As smitten by a sudden spell.

Adona look'd upon her Lord;
Adona, the too much adored,
Gaze'd, as her eyes, that could not weep,
Might from their stiff'd sphers outleap.
But, in the madness of that hour,
The Flamen's words had healing power:—

* On thy dead Lord thou lookest here,
Whom love for thee has slain;
Whose absence thou must learn to bear
Till his life come back again.
His lie—than death is stronger far;
He still shad conquer, but to be
Again subdued, for ever and aye;
Six months on earth he had to these,
Six months spent with Proserpine.

Adona heard; then steep'd, embrased
In her two loving arms her Lord,
And wept the tears her beauty graced,
Too much beloved, too much adored.
Wherefore it is, that, evermore,
When WINTER, like the furious boar,
Slays the bright SUN, and NATIVE all
Wears a white shroud, a snowy pall,
The Syrian damsels mourn thy death,
Adonis! but with hope and faith,
Expectant of thy resurrection;
When EARTH, because of thy affection,
Anew shall blossom and shall bear;
Dying and living every year:†

* The fable of Adonis, the young favourite of Venus, has been thus explained:—“Adonis, or Adonai, was an Oriental title of the Sun, signifying Lord; the boar supposed to have killed him was the emblem of Winter, during which, the reproductive powers of Nature being suspended, Venus was said to lament the loss of Adonis. This was related, according to life; whence both the Syrian and Argive women annually mourned his death, and celebrated his restoration.” The manner of treating the subject in the text is perfectly original; a novel invention humanising the old argument.



ADONIS AND ADONA.—DRAWN BY G. THOMAS.

of the Scilly Islands," he says, that it is usual there to sing Carols on Christmas-day at church. Goldsmith, in his "Vicar of Wakefield," writing about 1768, and "laying the scene of his narrative at a small town in the north of England," relates, that, among other customs which they retained, the inhabitants "kept up the Christmas Carol." Brand, in 1795, states that little troops of boys and girls, at Newcastle-upon-Tyne and other places in the north of England, "go from house to house, knocking at the doors, singing their Christmas Carols, and wishing a happy New Year." A writer, in 1811, in the North Riding of Yorkshire, notes—"About six o'clock on Christmas-day I was awakened by a sweet singing under my window. Surprised at a visit so early and unexpected, I arose, and, looking out of the window, I beheld six young women and four men welcoming with sweet music the blessed morn." "Carols," wrote our old friend William Howitt, in 1825, "begin to be spoken of as not belonging to this century, and, few, perhaps, are aware of the number of those now printed." He adds that possibly "upwards of 90 are at this time published annually."

A learned President of the Royal Society (Mr. Davies Gilbert) has published "Ancient Christmas Carols, with the Tunes: he writes, till lately, in the west of England, on Christmas-eve, about seven or eight o'clock in the evening, 'cakes were drawn hot from the oven; cider or beer exhilarated the spirits in every house; and the singing of Carols was continued late in the night.' On Christmas-day these Carols took the place of psalms in all the churches, especially at afternoon service, the whole congregation joining; and at the end it was usual for the parish-clerk to declaim, in a loud voice, his wishes for a merry Christmas and a happy New Year to all the parishioners."

In 1838 William Howitt wrote:—"The Christmas Carols which were sung from door to door, for a week at least, not twenty years ago, are rarely heard now in the midland counties. More northward, from the hills of Derbyshire and the bordering ones of Staffordshire, up through Lancashire, Yorkshire, Northumbria, and Durham, you may frequently meet with them. The custom of Christmas Caroling prevails in Ireland to the present time. In Scotland it is unknown. In Wales it is still preserved, perhaps to a greater extent than in England. After the turn of midnight on Christmas-eve, divine service is celebrated, followed by the singing of Carols to the harp; and they are similarly sung in the houses during the continuance of the Christmas holidays."

In the "Penny Cyclopædia" (volume Carol), date 1836, the writer states:—"It is still sung during the festive season in many parts of the country, though now seldom heard in the metropolis." Since the above was written, Carol-singing has been cherished by the publication of collections of Carols arranged and selected; one of which has been issued by the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge. Dr. Tammie has arranged, composed, and edited "Christmas Carols; or, Lays and Legends of the Nativity," including "Where is the Golden Cradle?" "O Wonder of all Wonders," by the Rev. W. J. Blew; a quartet or semi-chorus; "The Legend of Joseph and the Angel," concluding thus:—

Then be ye glad, good people,
This night of all the year,
And light ye up your candles,
The Star of Bethlehem,
And all the earth and heaven,
Our Christmas Carol sing,
Goodwill, and peace and glory,
And all the bells shall ring.

The collection closes with a very old favourite:—

God rest you, merry gentlemen,
Let nothing you dismay,
Remember Christ our saviour
Was born on Christmas-day;
To save poor souls from Satan's fold
Which long had gone astray.

Chorus.—O tidings of great comfort!
O tidings of great joy!

Delightful it is to hear the church bells ringing merrily on Christmas-eve, or the Carol echoing through the comparatively vacant street. Such delights have been thus touchingly sung by a living poet:—

Wake me, that I the twelvemonth long
May bear me to your yondering;
A lone man in the world's throng;
That treasured joys of Christmas-tide
May with mine hour of gloom abide;
The Christmas Carol ring.
Deep in my heart, when I would sing;
Each of the twelve good days
Its earnest yield of duteous love and praise,
Ensuring happy months, and hallowing common ways.—KESBLE.

With a graceful chanson of our own day we conclude:—

Be merry all, be merry all,
With holy dues the festive hall;
Prepare the song, the feast, the ball,
To welcome merry Christmas.
And, oh! I remember, gentle gey,
For you who bask in fortune's ray
The year is all a holiday.
The poor have only Christmas.
When you, with velvets mantled o'er,
Defy December's tempests' roar,
Oh, spare no garment from your
store,
To clothe the poor at Christmas.
From blizzards loads of fuel, while
Your homes with in-door summer
smile,

Oh, spare one farthing from the pie,
To warm the poor at Christmas.
When you the costly banquet deal
To guests who never famine feel,
Oh, spare one morsel from your meal,
To feed the poor at Christmas.
When gen'rous wine your care con-
trols,
And gives new joy to happiest souls,
Oh, spare one goblet from your bowls,
To cheer the poor at Christmas.

So shall each note of mirth appear
Miles sweet to Heaven than praise or
prayer,
And angels in their carols there
Shall bless the rich at Christmas.
Hon. R. SPENCER.

We append as a tailpiece to our Carol ramble a scene of out-door life, such as may often be witnessed immediately before Christmas-day. The weather is thick enough for a "London particular" fog; the folks on the trottoir give abundant evidence of a "raw, cold day," from the urchin with his hands deep in his pockets to the passenger of the better class in his chesterfield. To the right of the picture is a pretty piece of street pastime: the hobbledehoy is enjoying the slide, watched by the two boys, who are anxiously awaiting his departure that they may have their turn. In the foreground is a butcher on his fast-trotting cob, carrying out the Christmas joints, suggestive of a warm contrast to the picture, and reminding us of Bloomfield's homely verse:—

The butcher whistled at the door,
And brought a load of meat;
Bows rubbed their hands, and cried "There's more,"
Dogs wagged their tails to see it.

THROWING THE HOOD.—On Old Christmas-day the village of Ilaxey is enlivened by the anniversary of what is termed "throwing the hood," one of the most ancient customs in England. It is said to have had its origin from the Madame de Mowbray, who, a few years after the Conquest, was riding through Cray, a hamlet of that village; the wind blew her riding-hood off her head, and so great was the amusement to Madame Mowbray, that she let twelve acres of land to the twelve men who were run together, and gave them the curious name of Boggomores. The land, with the exception of about a quarter of an acre, has for centuries been let to the Boggomores. The throwing of the hood now consists of the inhabitants of West Woodside and Ilaxey trying who can get the hood to the most distant dwelling in each place. The hood is made of straw, covers the head, and is about two feet long, and nine inches round. The twelve Boggomores are stationed so as to catch hold of the hood, and they are pelted against the multitude. As soon as a Boggomore catches the hood or catches it—for it is always thrown from one to another as soon as caught—the game ceases. Last year there were not less than 2000 people present from all parts of the neighbourhood, in spite of a dense fog, to witness this custom.—*Lincolnshire Chronicle.*

* The music sold by C. Lonsdale, 26, Old Bond-street.

THE POPPY AND THE FIR.

BY JOHN OXFORD.

(From the German of Gustav von Puttels.)

THE POPPY.

We are altogether wrong if we imagine that the flowers can do nothing but bud, and bloom, and smell, and fade, for, although this opinion is very generally entertained, it has merely been forced upon us by our own conceit, which would fain make us believe that everything in nature exists only for our sakes, and that, because we can only perceive the outer life of flowers, they have, forsooth, no inner life at all. However, as I have already said, that is not the case. Not only has every flower a character of its own, so that one is modest, another vain and proud, a third cheerful and brilliant, a fourth dull and sullen, according to their different hues and habits; but every one has also its own wishes, aspirations, joys, loves, and sorrows, while all of them have in common a most exalted patriotism—not a mere attachment to the soil, but such a devotion to the spot on which they have grown, that they cannot exist anywhere else—a sentiment which in modern times has often been wanting among mankind. The flowers have, too, an organ of communication, and to him who understood their language they could tell many a pretty tale, and he could pass many a night (for that is the proper time, as we shall presently see) in listening upon the empanelled field, and all the motley images which passed before him would, probably, appear to him like a beautiful poetical dream.

Now, the narrator of this tale was lying, one balmy moonlight night, on the flowery carpet of the wood, and listening—or, as some will rather believe, dreaming—when all at once he heard a thousand little voices rising from the flowers. Probably some kind fairy, to whom he had unconsciously done some good office, had lent him his hearing for the night. The reed whispered a long dismal lyric poem into the ear of his neighbour, who listened with great attention. The common cornflower, who is a sort of scandalous chronicler among the flowers, chattered away; while at a short distance the red mossflowers wereittering together, and had evidently told something droll. The bell-flower was silent, but she constantly gave assent to what her neighbours said by nodding her head constantly and forwards. With the quaking-grass it was just the reverse, for that kept shaking its head, and could not believe anything it heard. Whether they had perceived the listener, and, according to the old proverb, wished to punish him for his intrusion, or whether the topic was a favourite one with flowers—for some reason or other—their discourse on this occasion chiefly turned on the injustice and unkindness of which man had been guilty towards them.

"Alas!" said a knot of thyme-blossoms, in a mournful tone, "look where the clumsy foot of man has again crushed our dear brothers and sisters."

"Ay, they do not care for us," said a catchfly, who liked to be looked at, and therefore raised herself straight on her slender stem, "however we may care them and adhere to them. If they would only destroy us for being mischievous, like the hemlock, it would not be so bad; but nothing is harder to bear than their contempt. They do not even think us worth the trouble of keeping their feet from our heads!"

"According to your remark, then," kindly interposed a forget-me-not, "we ought to consider mankind as most unjust towards us. And yet I can answer these reproaches. Are we not their loveliest ornament when they hold their festivities, and do they not always select us as messengers of their holiest feelings—of their love?"

"Those times have long gone by," grumbled the sorrel. "Does not man, in the height of his presumption, dare to meddle with his Creator's handiwork, and endeavour to imitate, may to surpass, us with wretched things made of painted paper? Which, now, are the fairest ornaments—ourselves or those paltry copies? And as for messengers of love, they only employ us in that capacity when they can get no better. Besides, the language of flowers has long gone out of fashion; they call it sentimentality, and laugh at it."

"I could endure all that," interposed the lily; "for how can man appreciate feelings which he does not know? Only, he ought not to deny the existence of those feelings which are brought plainly before his eyes. When night has passed, and we look around us in the light of morning, we are sure to miss one of our playmates, who has bowed her head in the evening twilight, or has been despoiled by the sharp night breeze. We then murmur over her, and tears tremble in our eyes. Man sees these tears; but, without troubling himself to understand them, he denies that the drops are a sign of our mournful feelings, and says that it is nothing but the dew which the morning mists have scattered over us."

This proof of human injustice must have been very convincing, since for the moment none of them had anything to say by way of addition or reply. A group was then formed around a brilliant poppy which stood close by me in full bloom. For some time I had remarked that all the flowers in her neighbourhood laid their heads together, and took no part in the conversation which had been so little flattering to me. When the pause occurred, the cowslip, shaking her bells, cried out, "Silence, silence, sisters! The poppy has something to tell us." "Silence, silence; a story from the poppy" was the general cry, and all of them listened attentively. Even the reed-grass had finished its long poem.

The Poppy now raised herself on her slender stalk, looked around her, and then rocked several times backwards and forwards. I expected that she would have let her audience entreat her for a long time, would have feigned hoarseness, and at any rate would have uttered a world of excuses; but things of this sort could not have been in fashion among the flowers; for the Poppy, without any ado, told her story at once.

"You wish to hear me, then?" said she. "Well, I must tell you that, according to ancient traditions, which have been handed down from one generation to another in my family, we poppies owe our existence to a very singular event. Of course you do not believe that, when the world was first created, all flowers were scattered all at once over the earth. No—none came after the other, and things went on then much as they go on in the spring time now."

"And what goes on in spring?" interposed the campion.

"You had better ask that of the daisy," replied the Poppy, "as she is an earthly flower; and then do not interrupt me any more."

The daisy, who had generally been lightly esteemed—nay, was looked upon as somewhat of a simpleton—while her cousin, the pansy, stood in higher repute, on account of her softer or elegant, was brought into disrepute at being allowed to speak, and her small white flowers became despised with a delicate red, such as may often have been observed in that little flower. She then raised her head gratefully to her lady patroness, and proceeded without waiting for further question:—

"How we offended the Winter, and made him so hard with us poor flowers, I can't say; indeed, opinions are divided on the subject. Only I am much too certain that I can bear us, and will not rest till he has swept us all from the surface of the earth. Still his reign does not last for ever, and after him comes out best friend—the Spring. Good Spring looks very gay when, of all the motley children, which, on his departure, he so sparingly confined to the care of Summer, not one is left, and he is forced to wrap his head in a long grey veil, because there are no flowers or leaves to twine into a wreath. He then passes his soft warm hand over the earth, and beckons and calls his darlings, so that when will yet put out his head, so much they have been beaten by the rough Winter. Nor is this fear altogether groundless, for instances have been known when Winter after his departure has returned and destroyed the flowers. Some flowers, indeed, which have a remarkably kindly heart, do not allow the Spring to wait long, but

come out as soon as they can. Such is the case with the good violet; but when she looks round and finds the earth so bare, and so few of her sisters awake, her courage fails her, and she again hides her head under the green leaves. Men call this modesty, but it is much more fear; and then there awakens in the violet a strong desire for her companions, which she expresses by the sweetest fragrance. Poor violet her desire remains unsatisfied, and when the others come she has already completed the measure of her days. However, as she always feels attracted by her sister flowers, she sometimes returns for a few days in autumn, and obtains her wish, though, for that very reason, she does not smell so sweetly as when she blooms for the first time."

"You now see what happens in spring," resumed the Poppy; "and so it was in the time of the creation—one flower came after another. However, at the time to which my traditions extend, most of them had already assembled, and the earth was truly beautiful, for joy and content prevailed everywhere. Men and animals dwelt together in peace, and there was nothing but rejoicing from morning to evening. There was only one single being in the wide world which did not share the general joy, and wandered mournfully over the young earth—that being was Night. You will ask why she was so sad. I recollect, she was alone in the world, while everybody else had a companion; and is there any happiness when we cannot impact it? Besides, she became more and more sensible of a fact, which she would willingly have concealed from herself, that she was the only being whom the others would not approach in love. For, although she lighted her own little lamps, she could not help hailing the beauties of the earth from man and brute; and this alienated the affections of all. They did not, indeed, complain to her face; but the rejoicings with which the morning sun was greeted showed plainly enough how little the Night was esteemed. This naturally grieved her, for she was good and kind, and she wrapped her head in her thickest veil to shed her bitter tears. We compassionate flowers were touched by her sorrows; and, although we could not alleviate her pain, we sought to cheer her to the best of our ability. But we had nothing to offer save colours and fragrance, and in colours Night has never taken much pleasure. We therefore stored up for her our sweetest scents; nay, some, for instance the evening violet, gave no smell in the daytime, that they might receive all their fragrance for the night; and this custom, as you know, they have preserved ever since. Still all this was insufficient to console the mourner, and she flung herself in her grief before the throne of the Creator.

"'Almighty Father,' she began, 'Thou seest how everything is happy in Thy creation; I alone am joyless, lonely, and unloved on the earth, and there is no single being to which I can communicate my grief. Day flies before me, though I hasten after him with ardent longing; and in like manner every creature turns away from me. Almighty Father, take pity on my grief, and grant me a companion.'

"In this the Creator heard with pity the prayer of Night, and fashioning Sleep, gave her to him for a companion. Is it not known that the Creator made Sleep out of kindness; that Sleep alone is beloved, and confers happiness, is the only joy and consolation? Night took her friend into her arms, and henceforth times were changed for her; not only had she ceased to be alone, but the hearts of all yearned towards her. Since Sleep, the beloved of all mortals, came with her whenever she chased Day from the earth. Soon other kindly creatures were found in her train—Dreams, the children of Night and Sleep. These passed over the earth, with their parents, and so formed a friendship with me, who was then a child in heart. But, as I change so often, Passions awoke in man, and his soul became darker and darker. Evil communication soon corrupts children, and thus some of the Dreams, through their intercourse with man, became frivolous, deceitful, and cruel. Sleep observed this change in the children, and wished to banish the erring ones from her train, when the rest came to her and said, 'Let our brothers still be with us; they are not so bad as they seem; and we promise to use our best efforts to repair the mischief they have done!' The Father granted the wish of his good children; but these as experience shows, have mostly been the associates of bad men."

"As for mankind, they became worse and worse. One beautiful night a man was lying on the fragrant grass, and Sleep and Night approached him, but, Sir, prevented them from using their power. A frightful thought arose in his soul—the thought of murdering his brother. In vain did Sleep shake down upon him her soothing drops from her magic wand; in vain did the Dreams sport around him, with motley forms; he always shrank back from their gentle influence. Then Sleep called his children around him. 'Let us fly,' said he; 'this man is unworthy of our gifts; and they fled.' When they were at a distance Sleep took his wand, half angered that it had showed its power so ill, and fixed it in the ground, while the Dreams hovered over it, scattering about their light, airy images they would so willingly have bestowed upon man. Night, observing this, breathed life into the wand, so that it struck root into the earth. It thrrove and still preserved the virtue which had invited Sleep; while the gifts of the Dreams became delicate, trembling leaves. This was the origin of us poppies."

The story was ended, and the flowers on all sides bowed their thanks to the narrator. Then morning dawned, and when it was bright day the leaves of a centaury, which had been scattered by the wind, came fluttering along, and, stopping by every flower which they passed, paid her a sad farewell, and tears trembled in them all.

THE FIR-TREE.

"Why did the Fir-tree break when the daisy said that the Winter was wicked, and could not bear flowers?" asked the linden.

"Because he was angry," replied the oak; "and when he is angry he always breaks. Have you never heard that when the wind comes running through the wood he cries to us flowers, 'Bow your heads!' but that the Fir-tree says, 'Stand firm!' Thus, when the trees of the forest are awed, and pay their respects to the wind, the Fir-tree remains quite upright, and only turns about creaking, because he is in an ill-humour."

"But what has that to do with the Winter and the daisy?" said the linden.

"Ask him yourself," gabbled the poplar, "you will hear what says—he often gives sharp replies."

However, the linden was still curious; and who can blame him? When one stands year after year on the same spot of ground, one does not readily lose a story, from the fear of getting a sharp reply. When it is too sharp, we can shake it off; and so it is with flowers. At the same time the linden was prudent, and considered how he might best open the conversation.

"Fir-tree," said he, "how is it that you always wear the same dress, whether it is winter or summer, warm or cold?"

"Because I am not vain and always seeking for novelties, like you," answered the Fir-tree.

"He has you there," said the poplar.

By all that the Fir-tree was wrong, and the reason he gave was not the true one. The fact was, that he could do nothing contrary to his nature. However, human beings are quite as bad, and set down whatever lies in their nature as a special virtue. He who has no taste for dress exclaims against the vain, nay, some abuse poetry because they are insensitive to its beauties, and these are even worse than the Fir-tree. The linden had a good mind to be offended by the answer, and abstain from further conversation, but curiosity prevailed; and this was a very good thing, for, in the first place, there is no use in pouting; and, in the next, he would never have known the story of Winter, and we should not have known it either. He therefore grumbled a little to himself, and then, turning to his uncivil neighbour, he said—

"At any rate, you can tell us something about Winter, for you know him, and it is said that you like him. We others know nothing about him, for we are asleep when he comes, while you keep awake, and doubtless have a talk with him during the long, long time."

The Fir-tree kept silent for awhile, and all the trees listened, anxious to know what would come of the conversation, though only the widow spoke:—

"You have a stout heart, linden-tree; you stick to him."

At last the Fir-tree replied:—

"Leave me alone, and, if you want to know anything about Winter, keep awake. Those who desire knowledge should not sleep their time away."

The conversation would have been now brought to an end, had not the oak put in a word. The oak stood in very high repute among the trees of the forest, because he was the oldest and strongest, though perhaps he might not have gained respect for the former quality, if he had not owned the latter likewise.

"Fir-tree," said he, "you seem an uncivil fellow; however, you are not so bad, but always keep the rough side outwards. I know you better than the others, for I saw you when you were scarcely a year old, and had only just begun to sprout forth. But why are you so uncouth with your comrades? Did we not all spring from the same soil? Do not our roots embrace below, as our branches embrace above? Do we not all unite in resisting dangers which we could not resist apart? The others adorn themselves with leaves and you with needles, because your bark is perhaps rougher than that of the beech, must you, forsooth, seclude yourself, and assume an unkindly appearance which does not belong to you? No, no; tell your companions your story. Rejoice with them in good times, just as in bad times you stand by them."

These were serious words, and the Fir-tree took them to heart, as might have been the case with many others. After reflecting a little while, he proceeded thus—

"You wish to hear about Winter. Be it then! I know you cannot bear him; but, nevertheless, lay aside all your prejudices against him. Do not fancy that I am partial because he is my friend; I am only just because I know him. But to the facts. When the Creator had made the world, and the flowers were springing in the field, and the trees in the forest, He called the Seasons around him, and said: 'Look on my world—how beautiful it is! I give it over to you; share the flowers and trees among you; but love and cherish them.' Then the Seasons were very happy, and sported with the children of Nature. This lasted for a short time, but soon a disagreement began to arise here and there. The bold, fickle Spring could not agree with the slow, cautious Winter. The glowing Summer fondled the Autumn phlegmatically. Autumn reproached Spring with spoiling the flowers—in short, the contest became more and more violent, and the flowers and trees were the chief sufferers." At last Autumn said, "This must not go on any longer; we can never agree while we hold things in common; so let us make a division." The hint was taken, and the Seasons divided the earth between them. Winter built a house for himelf at each of the poles; Summer moved about the middle of the earth, and Spring and Autumn established their domain between them. You will hear presently that this division was not strictly preserved, but still it has not been much departed from, and Winter still resides in his old house."

"How do you know that?" asked the Linden.

"I was told so by my cousin, who once paid him a visit."

"Observe, he's romancing a little," whispered the poplar to his neighbour.

"How could your cousin visit him?" asked the Linden. "Is he not fixed to the ground as we are?"

"It happened thus," replied the Fir-tree. "Some bold adventurous men once came to look for wood, that they might build a ship; and my cousin, a tall slender fir, was standing proudly among the other trees of the forest. They had no sooner espied him than they cut him down, and made a mast of him. They then put out to sea. The mariners hung a huge cloth about my cousin, and said, 'Hold it fast;' and on his head they set a coloured streamer, which could be seen glistening a long way off. My cousin enjoyed himself during the voyage, and did his duty right well; for when the wind came, and tried to take the cloth away, he held it fast, and would not bend in the least. For this reason the sailors esteemed him more than all the wood in the ship. As they approached the north more and more, they suddenly came to the Winter's house. This looked humble, but strong; and when the ship knocked against it, Winter came out, quite surprised at the strange visit. It then struck him, that wherever he had gone he had seldom received a hearty welcome; so, feeling little disposed to hospitality, he shook his head, so as to make the white flakes fly around him. However, when he perceived my cousin, he became civil at once, and they had a pleasant chat; for Winter is always well-disposed towards us fir-trees. He wished to know how all his brothers were going on. And, when the mast had told him everything, he began to tell stories too; and wonderful stories they were. What you now hear is one of them."

"There seemed to be no end to the Winter's tales, and the old gentleman was so happy in pouring forth the stores of his memory, that he would not let the ship go, but kept his arms locked round it. My cousin was delighted beyond expression; but the more he was pleased the worse became the condition of the crew. One morning he heard them consulting together. 'Our wood is burned, our stores are consumed,' said the steersman; 'and if the ice does not soon melt we shall all miserably perish; let us cut down the mast and burn it, it will last us a long while.'

"When my cousin heard this, he implored Winter to let the ship go, and Winter complied to save his favourite, though he would not have done as much for man. He let the ice melt, and the ship returned home happily with her crew."

"That was kind, indeed," exclaimed the trees with one voice.

"Let me, however, return to my story," said the Fir-tree. "The earth, as I have said, was divided, and each of the Seasons had a separate domain. Things would, no doubt, have remained in this state, had not Spring, with his wonted fickleness, again desired a change. He never could bear to remain in one place!" He called the other Seasons together, and made the following proposal: 'Let us make another division,' said he, 'and, as the earth belongs to us all in common, do not let each of us be confined to one portion. Let every one have a fixed period of time, during which he alone shall govern the earth.'

"Content," said Summer, 'provided I am allowed to retain the girdle.' 'And I the pole,' added Winter. The thoughtless Spring was perfectly satisfied if he could only attain his end, and Autumn hoped to be compensated in some other way. Thus the bargain was struck, and Spring was just about to commence his reign, when cautious Winter said, 'But lest one should take to himself all the beauty of the earth, let us divide that too.'

"Good," said Spring, "I will take the buds."

"The blossoms belong to me," said Summer.

"The fruit is mine," said covetous Autumn, "and the leaves of the trees shall belong to Winter."

"Winter could not object to this arrangement, so the contract was concluded, and Spring began his reign. He kissed the trees and flowers, so as to make them put forth buds, and all greeted him with a smile. When the buds burst, and a thousand colours were sparkling in leaf and flower, Summer occupied the throne of the earth. But now the arrangement was less strictly observed, for Autumn, who always had an eye to his own advantage, made a separate contract with Summer, who was to leave him the flowers in exchange for the fruit. Autumn, they say, had the best of this bargain, and when his time came he gathered in the fruit to which he had a perfect right. However, something else occurred, by which poor Winter was heavily defrauded. You will recollect that by the terms of the agreement Winter was to have the leaves from the trees; nevertheless, in the glowing season of love, when the leaves hung down together, and the flowers coquettishly displayed their thousand bright colours in the grass, something of a flirtation had begun between the same leaves and flowers. As is generally the case, the love-making began with a little teasing. When the sun was about to shine on the flowers with his warm bright rays, the leaves of the trees would interrupt them; and then, before the flowers were aware of it, they would suddenly slip aside, so that the little beauties below were dazzled by the sudden blaze of sunlight. Then the flowers would shut their eyes, while the leaves chuckled on the branches above. Again, when a refreshing shower came, the leaves would hoard up the drops, and when the flowers thought it was all over they would let them fall, so that the flowers were all frightened, and shook their little heads. Presently, what was at first mere teasing became real severity, for the sun grew hotter and hotter, and the poor flowers would all have been scorched if the leaves had not like so many shields, caught the burning rays. After these serious marks of affection, the old pair of children said, "I would no do, and the leaves ought to be united. But how was the union to be effected, when the leaves hung above, and the flowers sparkled in the grass below? Love can always find a way. Even flowers and leaves soon found a messenger by whom their sighs and vows could be carried backward

and forward, and this was the ivy. He had sprung from among the flowers below, and now, as a green wreath, wound up the top of the tree, forming, as he kept his leaves close together, a ladder of sallows, a most discreet chain of love? Who, on the first glance at the ivy, does not recognise his high mission? Who cannot perceive in his evergreen tendrils the suppressed sighs, as it were of a youthful, dreamy love? With such a messenger the flowers and leaves were perfectly satisfied. However, Autumn's reign drew to its close, and he was about to pluck the last flowers of the field. The leaves grew pale, and earnestly entreated Autumn to let them descend to their dying mistress's bower. He granted their prayer, though in this he exceeded his rights, and encroached on those of Winter, to whom the sole government of the leaves belonged. Autumn shook the trees, and the leaves, now liberated, came fluttering down to the ground. Now a life of the middest love began. Autumn, who was greatly pleased, struck up a wild melody; and the leaves flew in a whirling dance, round the flowers, until these, becoming weak and weary, dropped their heads, when the leaves also, to Autumn's last noisy tune, laid themselves down for their last repose. Then Winter came on, and the fields and woods that received them were bare and lonely. There was no bough to welcome him except our poor fir-trees, for the flowers would have nothing to do with our sharp needles; and the ivy, who moved himself from tree to tree, as if he would decorate a triumphal arch for the Winter, and from branch to branch, as if he would conceal the inconstancy of the leaves, and give the trees an ornament to compensate for the foliage they had lost. Winter was touched by the sight, and while, in his rage, he struck down the few leaves that, against their will, were still left hanging on the branches, and chased them about over ice and snow, he said solemnly to the leaves of the ivy, 'I will protect you and maintain you in the kindly office you have chosen. Remain as you are, messengers of love, and carry silent greetings from flowers to leaves, from Autumn to Spring, forming a perpetual bridge between the Seasons. Your vocation is to embrace and unite—you are the evergreen memory of fields and forests—you shall hide the severity of Winter.'

"Thus said Winter to the ivy, but on us fir-trees he bestowed his full affection, and prepared for us honour which you other trees do not share."

"And what might those be?" asked the other trees, somewhat piqued.

"Winter is the season for good feeling," continued the Fir-tree, "and he could, therefore, perceive and appreciate that quality in the ivy. This fact is well known to mankind, for at no time do they come together so closely as in Winter. He brings with him the kindly, sacred, and mysterious festival of Christmas; and you see in his train that most friendly of guests, the 'Christmas-man.' Men say that the 'Christmas-man,' is love for parents and friends, but this is not true. When he exerts his magic power, mankind find him irresistible. In the beginning of the Winter, the mother is pondering and pondering, but that is only because the Christmas-man keeps whispering into her ear. And whoever goes out to buy anything about Christmas time always comes back with a larger purchase and a shorter purse than he intended. It is not that the pretty things have tempted him, but the Christmas-man, who is ever whispering and persuading, and pulling at the heart, so that the hand opens more and more to improve the Christmas festivity. We Fir-trees know this well, for we are the Christmas-trees, and the good Christmas-man always puts us in the very midst of the rejoicings; and, whether they take place in palace or in cottage, we are sure to be there. However poor the parents may be, they always fix a few candles to our green boughs, for the sake of the merry children. Gold and silver hang from our summits; we bear glittering fruit, and children clap their hands before us; for however beautiful all the rest may be, the Christmas-tree is, nevertheless, the most beautiful of all, having been endowed by the Christmas-man with his own peculiar magic. Perhaps the children are so fond of the Christmas-tree because it is in itself the mind of a child. All sorts of glittering images are twined about the green boughs of hope, and the tree stands rich and golden, mysterious and inexplicable. But one glittering image falls off after another, the gold proves tinsel, the hope wittier, the riddle is solved with the last spangle that is taken off, and nothing is left but a faded Fir-tree. In the mind of a child one golden dream fades away after another, one riddle is solved after another, and what is life otherwise than as in the mind of a child?"

But when the spangles have all fallen off, is all your glory over?" asked the aspen-tree.

"Then they put the tree on the hearth," replied the Fir, "and he hears many a pretty story which the folks tell when they look into the glowing fire. He listens attentively, but when anything drops out that does not please him, he crackles, so that the sparks fly out, and make the company in the chimney quake again. Even though the golden apples have all gone, the children give a mournful look from their corner when they see the Christmas-tree burning."

"So that is the history of Winter and the Fir-tree. Another time I'll tell a story which a Christmas-tree overheard in the chimney, for very pretty stories are known by man."

THE FOREST BROOK AND THE STONE.

THE FOREST-BROOK.

The Fir-tree had finished its story with the melancholy prospect of a doubtful continuation. His last words had rustled away, and the whole forest was buried in deep repose. One sound alone interrupted this solemn silence, the sound of the brook as it splashed at intervals against stones and roots—the eternal clock of the forest. As it murmured along, now glistening brightly in the sun, now overshadowed by trees and clouds, making the images which it reflected tremble on its surface. Its monotonous sound gradually changed to intelligible discourse, and it began a story unasked, though not unlistened to, by the flowers and trees.

These heard with profound attention. A solemn silence still prevailed in the wood, and the brook still continued its splashing—the only sound that could be heard far and wide. This is the stillness of the forest. Who does not know it—who has not, once in his life, felt it and recognised it as the Sabbath of the plants? All around is so still and solemn. Even the deer breathe more softly and refrain from moving, while the hunter, as if overcome by a pleasing awe, forgets his passion for the chase, and sinks into the grass to partake of the general repose. It is at such times that the brook tells stories to the trees and flowers.

"Do you know whence I come?" said the brook. "Do you know my origin? The source of the meadow-brook is well known. It appears plainly enough as a little spring, bounding over hill and stone, and then becomes wider and wider, until its scanty dress of grass becomes too narrow, in spite of the soft caresses of the grass-blades, and at last puts on a stiff broid of reeds, decorated with light flowery spangles or with black buttons. The source of the mountain-torrent is also well known. High above lies the snow—the mountain's perpetual cap—which the sun colours when he rises and sets, and which the clouds adorn with a marvellous veil; while near the ice of the glaciers is sparkling with its dark blue beryl colour, reflected in the cream. While at last it comes to an abrupt, bony bank, but a cheerful life is busy within—a constant oozing and flowing, so that the water drops are passing a perfect game at hide and seek through the chasms and the crevices. The cause of this is a sun-god who is eternally kissing the mountain-langs. The hard rock is at last softened by this enduring love, and the little springs are the result of the sun's kisses. These pursue their sport until their place becomes too narrow, and then they fall an outlet. When they first come into the last they are amazed at the wide world, which is open before them. Other curious springs follow in the track, and not very long after, a great waterfall, but afterwards broken, makes at last a lively mountain-torrent of its own, which, like the brook, flows from the mountain-sides, and descends into the valley, and finds a delightful resting-place in the fields. But I, the Forest-brook, whence do I come? You can't find my source—you can't point to me or show me my parents. Only follow my course. Now you think you have

found my source behind some stone or mossy hill, but off I bound and laugh at you from behind some forest root. Now a broad mirror, I hide myself among a thousand weeds and flowers; now I bury myself under a heap of stones, which, envious of the forest-green, have put caps of moss on their grey heads; and now I come trickling forth again. In fact, my source is the middle of the forest. Hear, then, how I came into being."

"On a bright cloud, which was gently sailing over the fields, sat a delicate little fay, the favourite attendant of the elin queen, arranging the jewels of her mistress. She took out of a casket a long, long string of costly pearls, a present from the sea. Titania had told her to be very careful with them, saying that the tears of the sea were her favourite ornament. Pearls, you must know, are the tears of the sea, which it does not shed, but which it represses till the fishermen bring them forth at the peril of their lives. They are, indeed, firm and hard; but, with their pale light, they always resemble eyes which have failed with weeping. The fay was delighted with the pearls, and held up the string to see whether it would shine brighter in the sunlight. However, the pearl is not like the diamond, which borrows its light from without; but the tear of the sea incloses its own soul from which it shines. Behind the fay sat the rogue Puck, who sees both men and fairies; and, while she was surveying the pearls with delight, he unperceivedly cut the string, so that the pearls rolled down, first over the cloud, and then to the earth. The fay was at first overcome with fright, but she soon collected herself, and, flying down from the cloud, pursued the falling pearls. While she was thus floating in the space between the clouds and the earth, she saw the bright beads rolling and sparkling in every direction, and she was about to turn back in de-pair, when she saw a green field beneath her, and thousands of pearls, like those she had lost glistening on the grass and in the flowers. She had already begun to fill her casket, when she perceived that the beads she collected were not pearls, the tears of the sea, but dew drops, the tears of the flowers, and with sorrowful heart she proceeded anew to seek for her lost treasure. Now she saw pearls in the eyes of a mother who stooped over her dying child, and these she collected. Now she saw tears of love, and as she went further she found other weeping eyes, and such abundance of tears that they overflowed the casket. Alas! how many tears are shed upon the earth: a wondrous brook often springs from the eyes of man, and I can tell its source—it is the heart, and it will flow forth at the call of pain, sorrow, contrition, and even joy. This brook exerts a wondrous magic for that heart must be very bad which is not moved by the tears of another. Men often would re-ist this magic and say they have no compassion for some tears, because they are well deserved. But here they are wrong, for tears are tears after all, and spring from a heart which has, perhaps, been sorely visited."

"Now, my fay took all these tears for the lost pearls, and, holding the casket firmly under her arm, flew back to the cloud. But, alas! the casket became heavier and heavier (for tears are by no means light), and when the fay opened it all the supposed pearls were dissolved. She flew disconsolate from cloud to cloud, for they all loved her and shared her grief. Indeed they sent their messenger, the rain, down to the earth to find the lost treasure. The rain streamed and flowed, and weighed down the trees and plants and washed away the dew, but it could not find the pearls. The rogue Puck saw the anguish of the poor fay, and repented of what he had done, for he had meant only to tease her not to grieve her; so, diving down into the depths of the earth, he brought from his friends, the gnomes and goblins, lumps of glittering spangles, which he brought to the fay. 'There you have all your gewgaws back again,' said he, 'better and brighter than ever.'

"The fay was delighted, and the clouds left off raining, but when she examined her present more closely she found it was only glittering rubbish. Stung with rage, she seized the bowl in which it lay, and flung it so far that the glittering fragments formed a wide arch over the whole horizon. This was the first rainbow; and since that time, whenever the clouds weep, Puck fetches his spangles, and the spectacle is repeated. The rainbow is very beautiful, and is the delight of man as well as of us flowers. Nevertheless it is deceiving—a fabric of gnomes, and edifices of us flowers. Men know this well enough; for when they hasten after it, it runs before them, so that they cannot reach it, and suddenly vanishes. And what becomes of it? Children say that it falls into the sea, and that water nymphs make then sparkling clothes of it. What was at first the result of chance is now deliberately brought about by Puck. He flies across the sky with his treasures, and, if any part of them is left, he flies back and builds out of it a second bow, smaller and less brilliant. Hence you so often see this phenomenon doubled in the horizon."

"The fay still sat mournfully on the cloud, and took no pleasure in the first rainbow, which she had herself produced. Titania came up to her, and, as the capricious queen happened now to be in a good humour, she smiled when her attendant told her the cause of her sorrow, and at once forgave her. Perhaps she put up the more readily with her loss because a spirit of the sea, whose heart she had won, had promised her another pearl necklace. Great folk are liberal even with the tears that are entrusted to them. But what was to be done with the heavy contents of the casket which the fay still held under her arm?

"I hasten down to the most secluded spot in my forest," said Titania, "and pour these drops among the most fragrant plants. They shall remain tears as they are, but they shall flow united—one large tear of the forest."

"The attendant obeyed her queen's command, and thus arose the first forest-brook—thus had the forest all its tears. You wish to know whence I spring? My source is like that of human tears—the heart; but it is the concealed heart of the fir-st. When a sorrow, pain, or melancholy moves this heart, the tears flow forth. In summer, when so many children of the forest are broken down and destroyed, I flow softly but unceasingly. In autumn, when all is faded, I weep in silent anguish for the blossoms and flowers which the wind often casts open me, so that my grief becomes their grave. In the gloomy solitude of winter I am congealed, and the tear becomes a pearl like the suppressed grief of the sea. Then do I cleave to the roots and stones with the faint brilliancy of eyes that are faded with weeping. But in the spring, when a sense of indefinite longing is kindled in every heart, the tears of the wood burst forth in mingled emotions of melancholy and joy, and, swelling up, I overflow my borders to greet as far as I can the flowers and the herbage. Often, too, I am touched by sympathy, and the forest-brook swells when the clouds shed tears of rain, or the flowers tears of dew. Can you not from my whole appearance—from the soft breath of sympathy with which I greet you—feel that my source is the heart of the forest? The melancholy brook presses towards me, and, wherever I flow, the flower that chiefly springs is the tender forget-me-not, which looks up gently like a faint blue eye in the hour of parting. The weeping willow in his endless grief drops his branches into my waves. Everywhere I excite sympathy. The very stone which opposes my course—the immovable stone which time leaves unscathed—sheds bright tears when my waters touch him, and my kisses are the only thing which he cannot resist. Among men there is a sorrowful legend about Alasurus, the wanderer, who survives every thing, and from whom death even flies. The stone seems to me to be the Alasurus of the forest, and there is much which he could tell you, for his memory goes back to the remotest times."

"The rogue Puck is now envious of the Forest-brook, which he tried to supplant with his frippery, but which, nevertheless, has risen to a permanent importance, and he often throws a knotted root or pointed stone into my stream, making the drops spring high into the air. Then you will see in the sunshiny motley colours, like those in the rainbow, playing around me. These are Puck's trinkets, which he hangs near my brim, as though he would say, 'Are not my gifts the most beautiful?' However, they soon melt away, while I flow unchanged. Thus the comic is often brought into contact with the melancholy, as it is by the work of some mischievous spirit. Even the heart of man when nearly breaking with the deepest grief is often convulsed by a comic emotion, and a smile will often pass over the weeping countenance. Amid the rich carpet of turf, or the luxuriant crown of foliage, a knotted root or a dry withered branch often peeps forth; and amid full-blown healthy roses you may light upon a shrivelled dwarf, which stands among her sisters like a grimace. All this is the work of Puck, but a penetrating soul knows how nature reconciles all these deformities."

"Thus the Forest-brook ended his tale. The stillness yet continue and leaves and flowers rustled but lightly. Suddenly areaking was heard, and a dry hough, snapped from the top of an oak, fell into the brook, making the drops fly on high and obscuring its brightness. The leaves above were scattered, and the blossoms below were crushed. This, too, was the work of the rogue Puck."

THE STONE.

The silence did not continue long; it was only the result of the first shock. Indeed, how could it last? When so many stand close together there is always something to gossip about; moreover, the flowers and trees had been amused, and would have liked to hear more.

"If the Stone has really something to tell," said a tall open fox-glove, "we request him to communicate it. Nay, he is bound to do something for our entertainment, for he thrusts himself between us, disturbs our intercourse, and never opens his mouth."

"As usual, the foxglove is more curious than any of us," said the strawberry-blossom.

"Curious!" retorted the foxglove. "Why is this charge perpetually brought against me?"

"It is because you're so curious that you lift your head so high, and look so far around you," said the strawberry-blossom.

"Nonsense!" said the foxglove. "I only do that to peep over the stone."

"A fine excuse," muttered the strawberry-blossom.

"And what do you do?" asked the foxglove.

"I bear fruit," was the answer.

"What are you quarrelling for down there?" said the birch. "One is just as vain and just as curious as the others; and that is natural enough, for what can we expect but childlessness from things that are never above a year old?"

This imprudent expression nearly provoked a violent war, for all the flowers felt offended, and resolved with one accord that they would not be insulted with impunity. The flag was called upon to act as general to the standing army. The light troops of iron-cape (aconites) equipped themselves, and the heavy artillery of thorn-apples set themselves in motion. The factions of the foxglove and strawberry-blossoms, which had, in fact, produced the whole commotion, resolved to units against the common enemy; the nettle and thistles were called in as militia to the flowers, and an appeal was made to volunteers. The rose was first ready, and began to sharpen her thorns. We may observe, by the way, that she had an especial grudge against the two, because, although she often shot up to a stately little plant, they would not acknowledge her as an equal. The dispute between them had lasted for many years, and had afforded much work to the diplomats of the flowers and trees, among whom the acacia had especially distinguished herself, by the zeal with which she espoused the cause of the rose, because she stood in immediate connexion with the smaller sort. Unfortunately the negotiations were all carried on by word of mouth, after the fashion of trees, or we should have had a fine heap of documents relating to the affair, which would have been all the more valuable in a diplomatic point of view, from the fact that the first page would have gone just as far as the last. The other flowers—which had not, like the rose, a private wrong to avenge—had not been idle on this question of honour. The anemone delivered long speeches on the rights of flowers, and the red-grass composed poems. The bilberry, filling her little cask, proclaimed herself *timidius*; while a large body associated to a free corps talked much, and not without animation, about dying for the public good, picturing to themselves in the most glaring colours the part which they would all play in the great triumphal processions.

Matters were really growing critical, and, if the trees did not arm themselves at once, many of them, from motives of inconvenience, disliked the contest. The fir-tree was particularly annoyed, because, as he had just been talking about the tender relation which existed between the trees and the flowers, he seemed open to a charge of romancing. However, the greater part of the flowers soon lost their warlike zeal, as they liked listening to the Stone better than fighting, and by general desire the whitethorn and the blackberry came forward and negotiated terms of peace. The blackberry was very zealous, as she considered herself somewhat as a relation to the strawberry, who had been the indirect cause of discord, while the whitethorn, who stood between the tree and the flower, was certainly an excellent diplomatist in a contest of the sort. An arrangement was, however, not so easy, as the birch could not be induced wholly to retract his offensive words. At last a loophole was found in an admission made by the birch, that, although he could not retract his declaration that the trees were older than the flowers, he was ready to admit that the stones were older than the trees; moreover, he assured the flowers that his expression was by no means intended to offend them, inasmuch as he had always held them in great respect. The foxglove murmured, and the shrewd pink thought to herself that the birch had said nothing at all; but the flowers generally professed themselves satisfied, and the difference was terminated by mutual expressions of friendship and esteem.

The discourse of the birch had again directed attention towards the Stone, and the desire to make him speak became very great; for, after the noise of war and the stormy excitement which had just passed, every one longed to hear a fanciful tale. But how was the taciturn, uncommunicative Stone to be approached? The trees wished to give the Brook the office of persuading the Stone, the Brook having boasted of his intimacy and called attention to his stores of knowledge. The flowers, on the other hand, thought that the grass might be best employed, as being closely allied to the moss. This difference of opinion perilled the peace just concluded, when the Brook itself proposed another method.

"Request the fern to negotiate with the Stone. He is neither flower nor tree; he is the Stone's fan, and, moreover, his confidant, who bends over him, caresses him, and flatters him. Be sure the Stone will refuse him nothing."

"Fern," said the flowers, "will you persuade the Stone?"

The fern nodded solemnly and silently. All listened, and the Brook murmured as though he also were persuading; though, whether he did so, no one really knows. The trees shook themselves once more, as a preparation for silence, and the flowers all thrust their little heads from the grass. In the meanwhile the fern had whispered to the Stone the general desire of the forest; and the following narrative strangely rolled forth through the broad leaves and through the moss which covered the narrator:

"The Brook is quite right when he says that I am the oldest in all the forest, and know of times which lie far beyond the reach of your memories. The stories which I have heard from you are for the most part true, though here and there a little correction is required. What the Poppy told you, viz. that one flower came after another on the earth, is true; the statement of the Fir-tree, that the seasons divided the earth between them, is true likewise; but, before this, a long long time elapsed, and many a battle had to be fought before things arrived at this point. When the Creator had first made the world the earth was a great rock, hard and barren, but firm and immovable. As the rock was so cold, the three elements, a mighty family, were sent to warm it and to fertilise it. First came the eldest brother, fire, clad in his dress of gold and purple. Violently and recklessly he raged through the earth, but the rock was hard and unmanageable. Fiercely as fire might glow upon it, it would not yield to its violence."

"A wild contest arose. In some places fire overcame the firmness

of the rock and shivered off fragments of all sizes, which he scattered abroad in the pride of victory. This was the origin of the Stones large and small. We lie scattered about the earth without plan or order, just as the unbridled element is his capricious mood cast us off.

'The result of the contest was not in favour of fire, for, while he fumed away his strength, the rock was acquiring force and skill to oppose him. He was at last forced to succumb; and the rock, taking him prisoner, loaded him with mighty chains, and confined him in its own core, where he remains still. That every stone contains fire you all know; for, when we are struck together, or when man, who loves fire, and has made him his servant, strikes one of us with steel, a spark leaps out. These sparks are all little particles of a mighty force, and I will afterwards tell you how fire is always furiously toiling and moiling in the core of the earth. When fire was thus vanquished, his younger brother, water, came clad in green and silver. He was more shrewd and experienced, and had, moreover, an easier task to perform, for he could not only make use of his brother's partial victories but had gathered knowledge by his fate. As he saw that so little had been done by open combat, he betook himself to entreaty and negotiation. He played about the rock, now caressing, now fighting, as he employed by turns entreaty, cunning, and violence.

"The earth soon began to change her appearance, for, as water had taken possession of all the places which his brother had conquered, he at once secured a firm footing. Thus he extended more and more, in

the wide basin which now contains the sea. The rock good-humouredly allowed these encroachments, but, cunning water rose higher and higher, and at last violently burst forth in those places which are now valleys and in which water has embedded its rivers. The rock even put up with this, and merely set up the banks as boundaries, but water became more and more encroaching, and often went far over the banks to attack the rock. The latter, however, knew that he had right and strength on his side, and drove the water back. Water, being obliged to recede, devised a stratagem which prevented him from losing all his conquests. All the light fragments which he had coaxed out of his hard opponent he concealed in his depths, and, when he had overflowed his banks and was driven back, he left behind some of this mixture of rock and water, and the rock allowed it, because the fragments were after all a part of itself. Thus rose the distinctions of sea, river, rock, and earth. Still all was barren, for what is gained by force bears no blessing. Then the fair sister of the elements, the air, was sent in her soft blue garment to reconcile and vivify the rest, and began to make peace between the rock and its adversaries. The rock would not indeed set fire at liberty, but air received permission to visit her imprisoned brother as often as she pleased, and whenever she did this she took a portion of his warmth, and scattered it over the whole earth. There were now signs of animation; the germs of plants began to strike root in the soil. This was not the result of heat alone, for the soil could not produce without the softening and coining influence of water. As, however, a firm boundary was set to the goodwill and activity of water, air caught from him his warm fraternal kisses, and, bearing them as greetings, scattered them about the soil. All became verdant, trees and blossoms sprouted forth, and man and beast could live upon the surface of the earth. Thus does air visit her brothers alternately, and each makes her a present—fire giving his heat, water giving his soft clouds. Hence you see air sometimes imbued with the glowing which she has caught from the embrace of fire; sometimes in the misty garment which water has hung about her as a parting gift. You see the fire of evening, the glow of morning—you see the mists rise when air bids adieu to water—you see clouds drift along. The clouds, as children of the water, do not like to be far above the earth. Air makes her servants, the winds, bear them on high; but they cast a longing look downwards, and, overcome by a desire for home, return to the earth dissolved in tears. The particles of fire which have been carried up by air do not choose to remain with her, but dart down to the earth, not gently, like the clouds, but wildly and tumultuously. This is the origin of that wonder, the storm, which affects every inhabitant of earth. The soft desire of the clouds is communicated together with the fierce glare of the lightning, and a sharp sense of terror, coupled with a deep longing for some distant home, take possession of man and beast, tree and blossom. But the blessing of air returns, and, when fire and water return to earth, all become strong and thriving.

"What further ensued—the arrangement made by the seasons—you have already heard. We Stones, who see everything blooming and verdant around us, and are old enough to recollect the early times of strife and disorder, rejoice at the sight, although we lie unheeded upon the soil which once belonged to us alone. Thus the foxglove made a very foolish speech, when she said that we should thrust ourselves among you; since, on the contrary, it is you that crowd around us, and will surely allow us the little spot of ground on which we have quietly and modestly taken our place."

The foxglove, blushed and overcome by confusion, hung down all her bells, while the strawberry-blossom tittered under her three green leaves, and the birch began to rustle overhead. The Brook, fearing that the old stone would be renewed, said, "We are much obliged to you for your story, grey elder of the forest, but you owe us still more."

"What do you want to know?" asked the Stone.

"We want to know what fire is about in the middle of the rock, and whether he is contented in his captivity."

"Not quite," replied the Stone, "for though his sister's visits amuse him, and he has the pleasure of contributing, with her assistance, to the fertilisation of the soil, he harbours a secret desire for liberty, and perhaps for absolute dominion over the earth. Water and air, however, well knowing that the reign of fire would cause general destruction, are careful in preventing him from becoming too violent. Wherever he appears air hastens to the spot, and kisses her beloved brother; and although her kiss renders him stronger and brighter, she causes the warmth to be distributed, so that it becomes less powerful. If she alone is insufficient to curb him, water comes to her aid, and, after a contest which is often noisy enough, fire is once more compelled to be quiet. He then sits deep in the bosom of the earth, devising all sorts of tricks by way of pastime. First he succeeds to melt half part of the stone, and, while it was in a state of fusion, painted it with the hues of his own bright purple garment. This was the origin of gold. Then he borrowed a light colour from the water which pressed towards him through the chinks of the rock, and painted silver. He even managed to melt off part of the reddish-black garment of his jailer, the rock, and with it he painted iron. No great blessing attends these things, as you may well imagine. Gold and silver are mere delusions, however men in their folly may toil after them; and iron, which has generally been produced at a time when the rock was not kindly disposed to the soil around it, is still used to break it up and rummage its contents. It is a surly discontented metal, because the rock was in an ill-humour when it bestowed its colour. However, as fire had the chief share in its production, the injury it does to the soil is not so very great; nay, on the contrary, it is a great cause of fertilising the earth. For all that, we Stones do not like to see the good earth so hacked about; and when the iron is driving along, we throw ourselves in its way, intercept its blows, and do it no little damage."

"When gold, silver, and iron were finished, fire became tired of always painting in the same colours, and commissioned air, when she returned, to bring him others from the earth. She accordingly gathered the grass and flowers, and took them down to him. She could not, indeed, bring much, but, nevertheless, fire, using the green of the grass and the soft enamel which he took from the flowers, painted a great variety of stone, which he penetrated with his warmth. Thus the interior of the earth, which probably you imagine to be very black and horrible, looks gorgeous and glittering, for the precious stones, which are the flowers of the abyss, the eyes of the rock, glitter from the walls. In fire's workshop a drop of liquid colour sometimes falls, or fire washes out the brush with which he has painted the gold, silver, and precious stones. This is the origin of the spurious ore and stones which glitter without value—which allure and deceive. These it is to which the Brook referred when he told you how Puck built the rainbow.

"We never observed that air carried off any of our brothers or sisters," said the tulip, shaking her head incredulously.

"That is because you do not pay attention," said the Stone. "Only observe the red light of evening, then you will find colours painted in the air, which you do not see otherwise. There are the red of the rose, the yellow of the crocus, the blue of the violet, the green of the grass, and the scarlet of the poppy—in short, colours too numerous to mention. It is not every evening, but only now and then, that you see this strange combination, which is, in fact, a nosegay in the hand of air, who is carrying it to fire. All that you perceive is the general appearance of the colours, for your sisters are too far to admit of your seeing them distinctly; but, if you question your own hearts, they will reveal the truth. You all feel powerfully attracted, and turn your heads towards the glittering nosegay, for your sisters' love exercises a charm upon you, though you are not aware of it."

"But what did fire do with the nosegay after he had sucked out the colour?" asked the forget-me-not. "He preserves it; and though it is colourless, it is glittering and imperishable in the bosom of the rock, where the leaves of the flowers are kept and become bright crystals."

The Stone was silent, and the oak said: "Pardon me if what I am about to ask you should seem offensive, though indeed it would be impossible to offend one as wise as you are. According to your own words, I am, after yourself, the oldest in the forest, so I have a right to your confidence. The other earthly beings have a purpose, undergo a change; we grow, blossom, and bear fruit, each after its kind; but you Stones remain unchanged, always the same, and always on the same spot. Now is not this existence dull and tedious?"

"You are just like the human race," said the Stone, half vexed, half smiling. "You think that you and your doings are amazingly important—in fact, are the grand object and focus of the whole creation. You grow, blossom, and bear fruit; but what is gained by all this? You fade away and are forgotten. Time passes his hand over the spot where you stood, and all trace of you is obliterated. Every individual,

whatever he may be, is a mere drop in the ocean of nature, unheeded by any but himself. Who, indeed, can tell for what purpose he exists. As for me I am never dull, though I have remained so long immovable for I have a receptive mind, and there is a constant change around me. Many thousand years have rolled over me, but no day is like another. Sometimes I amuse myself by listening to stories of distant regions. I then lay my ear against the ground, and low through the rocks flows the secret discourse of stones, telling of spots on the earth which are wondrously beautiful, and which stand as isolated tales amid the great tales which nature is ever constructing with the earth."

"Yes," said the Fir-tree in confirmation; "there are noble spots on the earth, as I have been told by my cousin, who, as you know, went a great way when he was a mast."

"Ay," observed the ash ironically, "spots where there is nothing but ice and snow, and where your friend winter keeps perpetual possession of the earth."

"With your usual carelessness, you have not been sufficiently attentive," calmly replied the Fir-tree. "Do you not know from my narrative, that there are also spots which belong exclusively to summer, and which winter never touches—spots where trees are always green, and where flowers always adorn the carpet of the fields—where water never congeals to ice, and where the snow only touches the earth like a cool kiss from the clouds?"

"Ah!" cried several flowers at once, "we should like to see such a place."

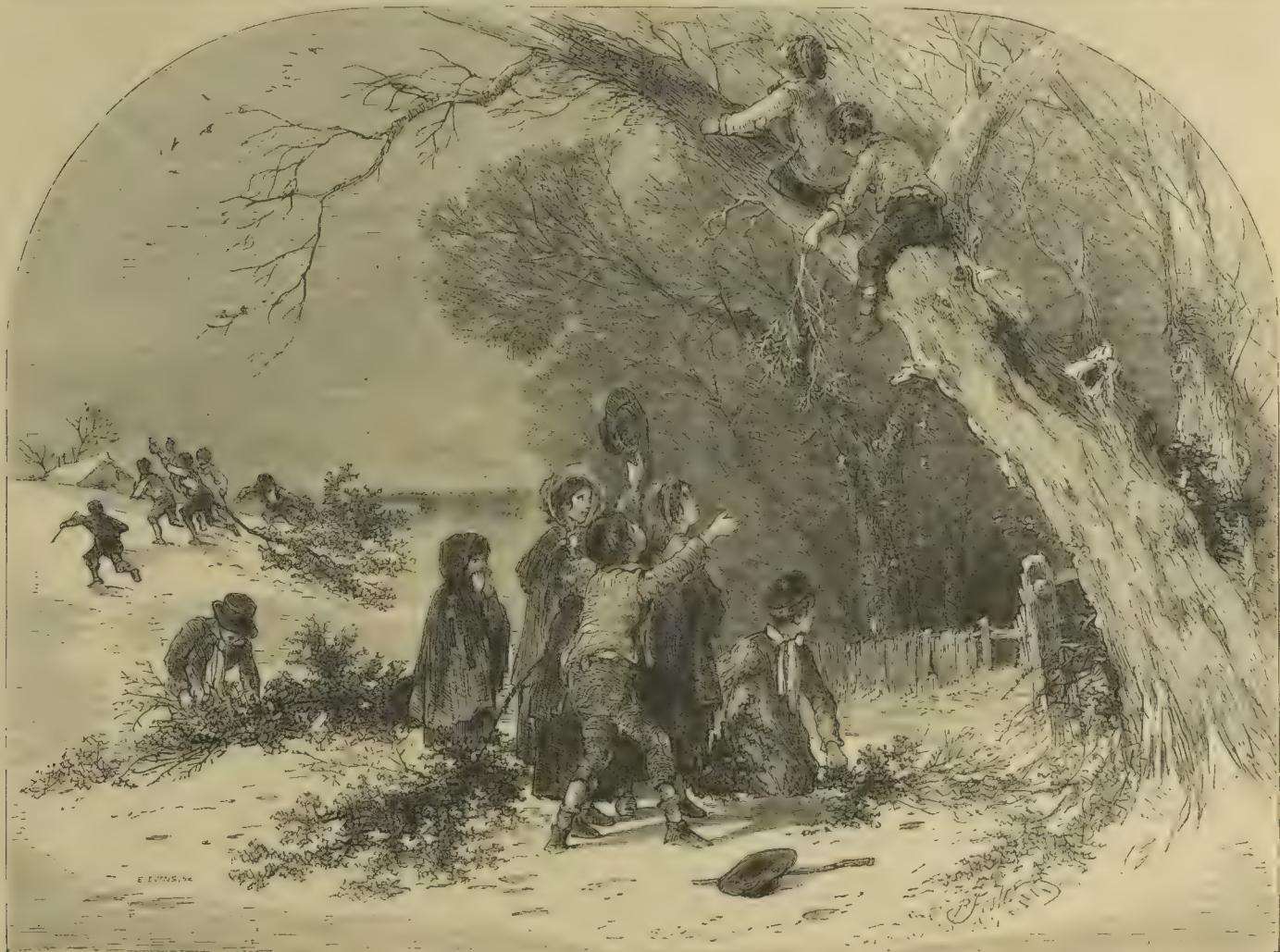
"I shall," said the Brook, somewhat proudly; and he splashed along more swiftly with the delight of travelling. "I shall join the river, and the river will join the sea, and then I shall be carried to those fair lands."

"In the meantime I will tell you something about them," said the Stone, "for I have just received intelligence of a most lovely spot. At the time when water made peace with rock he rested in a charming bay, while the crowns of the rock looked down upon him in a circle. This was the sea's favourite spot, and it called for air to endow the margin of the shore with a powerful charm. 'Dip your foot in my wave and I will cool it,' said the sea to the rock. 'I will crown your head with flowers,' said air, 'and the earth will lay a carpet about your knee.' 'And as you are so beautiful,' interposed the water, 'I will hold a mirror before you, that you may see your beauty, and your image shall ornament my waves.' And so it came to pass."

"The shore wound as a green and blooming curve about the sea, and the rocks looked down upon it smilingly. Now, once upon a time, when air visited fire, she told him of the fair retreat where water had passed his happiest hours. 'Could I not see it too?' said fire. 'I will try to talk the rock over,' said air. The rock happened to be in a remarkably good humour, and was easily to be persuaded in this bay, where water and air had shown him such civilities. Thus a compact was soon made. On the one hand, the rock opened a window on the top of a mountain where fire was imprisoned, so that he might peep out whenever he pleased. On the other hand, water allowed a little rock to rise above his surface and look around it. Just opposite to the bay, where the curve of the shore widens to admit the sea, lies this rock, cool and comfortable amid the waters. By day, when lights so brightly upon the earth, only smoke is seen issuing like a cloud from the rocky window which faces the island; but at night, when the earth is wrapped in darkness, fire thrusts out his flaming head, and his glowing eyes shine fiercely forth. Then he looks pleased enough, and plays all sorts of tricks, often practising a joke upon my friend the little rock (who, by-the-by, told me this story), who would give him fit-for-fit if it were not so firmly fixed in the sea. It is only since the window in fire's dungeon has been opened that the bay has become perfectly beautiful. Fire did not like to lock so much beauty without contributing himself, and he therefore flings his sparks far upon the shore; these falling on the green trees adhered to the branches, and were not extinguished, but were converted to fruits, red as when they were first issued from the mountain, and still filled with the glow which they brought. Still, as the rock tells me, these sparks, changed to fiery oranges, are still glowing on the trees. Indeed, these fiery fruits are perpetually glowing, decorating the branches from year's end to year's end, while the leaves of the tree are always shining with their fine dark brightness."

"But has this wondrous fruit no blossom?" asked the apple-tree.

"Certainly it has," replied the Stone, "a blossom—a beautiful, fragrant snow. The same branch bears both fruit and blossom, and the scent of the latter is blended with the fire of the former. In that part of the shore which is most abundantly blessed with this fruit, the rocks advance close to the sea, and wear on their heads an orange grove woven with the light branches of the vine. The vines peep down from the mountain, delighted to contemplate the gift they have bestowed. The sea rolls wondrous songs to the beach, and sings his garment with white foam. The rocks proudly bound the scene, while the air gently sports over the waters, impregnated with the sweet scent of the orange-blossom, and penetrated with the spirit of the sea, which tempts the inhabitants of earth to bathe in its waters. Every evening, when fire paints the horizon with red, she clothes the lofty rock with light rosy garments, so that it looks like a blushing bride of the sea. Every night fire decorates his mountain with glittering ribbons, which hang down, exhibiting fiery jewels, embroidered on a gold ground. Then the flames of fire, and the waves of water, sport with one another. The red light buries itself in the flood, and then peeps out broken by the trembling of the water. All this is seen by my friend the rock, who is himself crowned with vines, and who is adorned with a green cap which the turf has woven about his head, with a nosegay of orange-flowers, and a waving palm by way of a feather, while the pointed alow and prickly cactus nests close against his forehead. He sees this, and out of love for his brothers fire and water, and his sister air to whom he is indebted for so much pleasure, he has made them a snug place for familiar intercourse. At the extreme edge of the rock, close to the watery mirror, opens a small, almost imperceptible, door, behind which is a cool lofty cavern. Here water, fire, and air assemble mingled, but yet divided. 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GATHERING MISTLETOE.—DRAWN BY FOSTER.

MY MISTLETOE MEMORIES;

BEING THE OLD BACHELOR'S RECOLLECTIONS OF THE LADIES HE HAS KISSED UNDER THAT PLANT—THOUGH NOTHING EVER CAME OF IT.

WITH AN ILLUSTRATION BY FOSTER.

I DON'T know how it is. There never was a man had a greater capacity for getting married. I am notoriously a chimney-corner character, I hate living in chambers. I envy all my married friends, and regularly fall in love with their wives—with the full privility and consent of the husbands, of course. I'll be bound to say there never was a poor fellow threw himself more in the way of the thing. I am well enough off to keep a wife in a pleasant, gentleman-and-ladylike style. I am not worse-looking than nine fellows out of ten. I am decidedly good-tempered. I am not ridiculously awkward, or spoony, or bearish. And yet, confound it all, I can't get married.

Nobody can say I haven't tried. I've tried in town, hard, these ten seasons. I've tried in country-houses; and they say every man has his chance there. I've done my Florence and Rome. I've yachted in the Solent, and all about there, and subscribed regularly to the Ryde balls. I've even gone the length of rigging myself out in a ridiculous green coat, and hat and feather, at one of the suburban toxophiliases (though I never even hit the target), because there were a lot of girls in the club, and one was thrown a good deal together with them through the summer, in pic-nics, and that very provocative sort of thing. But all to no purpose. I can't do it. And yet how near it I have been, to be sure! So any one will say, I think, after reading these mistletoe memories, in which I mean to unburrish myself of some of my failures, which fell out at Christmas times, when people are particularly free and easy and sociable; and when, what with morning-room lounges, and rides, and private theatricals, and charades, and extempore Christmas gambols, there are no end of chances, as one may say.

I've had my share of these chances, I can assure you, and I think I did my best to profit by them (as I imagine my subsequent confessions prove), yet it all came to nothing. There was Fanny Hughes, now. There's a bit of the mistletoe under which I kissed her, with the date upon it, 184—. Bless me, is it so long ago? Why then she must be some four and thirty now; and I—but I'd rather not calculate. It was at the Hugheses' jolly old red-brick Berkshire house that I spent that Christmas, and a jolly party (as fitted the house) we were—the old folks fresh enough in heart to sympathise with us young ones (I say this advisedly, for I hadn't a grey hair in my whiskers then), and we young folks all determined on making a merry Christmas of it; and Fanny was the merriest of the lot. Dear Fanny Hughes (I beg the Rev. Mrs. Ingulphus Crabbe's pardon for remembering her by her secular name) was in complexion a blonde; in character the most piquant mixture of a blue and a romp that ever crazed a man. She rode like a Penthesilea, and when she rattled her light mare alongside of your steady hunter over the springy old park turf (not broken up for a century), with her bunches of golden ringlets flying back from under the brim of her black wide-awake—for she had adopted that becoming head-gear even at that early date—and her clear face glowing with the rapid motion, and her round bust heaving with the heave of the gallop, and her light laugh ringing through the air till the cows half a mile off looked up from grazing, and wondered if fairies were in the wind—I defy the soberest, flattest, most ditchwater-blooded of men not to have knocked under. And she was just as irresistible out of her riding-habit, for she sang

charmingly, and every now and then flung into her pathetic songs such a comical twang, and dashed her mirthful songs with such an under-music of sadness, and then she talked so wittily, and had read such a great deal, and in so many tongues, and was so wayward and reckless in her judgment of books, and men, and things, that even if a man did not go out riding with her, and thus escape the Diana of the park, he was sure to find himself at her chair all the evening, and so fall a victim to the Minerva of the drawing-room. Now, I was both riding man and reading man, and so I was hit on both sides, and I confess I thought Fanny saw it, and had no particular objection. But she was such a romp that it was hard to say. I don't imagine she had a bit of conscious coquetry in her nature, but she couldn't resist the harum-scarum blood that made her light heart dance to all sorts of tunes.

The only real spoon of that party (if I may be allowed the expression) was the Rev. Ingulphus Crabbe, a sucking Puseyite divine—an "acolyte" he delighted to call himself—who had just taken orders, after coming out a mild fourth-class at Oxford. Oh, what a bore he was! He was oppressively humble, and woe his hair parted in the middle, with a long black outer garment (which looked like a surtout arrested half way in its growth towards a great coat), a waistcoat buttoned to the throat, and surmounted by a tight white stock with no visible tie to it, and close-shaven whiskers; presenting altogether a mortified, self-satisfied, and most conceitedly abject appearance.

No wonder Fanny laughed at him, and no wonder he was scandalized at her. I used to draw caricatures of him in ridiculous positions, which amused Fanny exceedingly. In fact, as a Cambridge man, I felt it my duty to put Oxford down in the person of the Rev. Ingulphus; and I thought I had succeeded. He used to bring Keble's "Lyra Infantum" into the drawing-room, and Prudentius, and other barbarous ecclesiastical poets, and laboriously translate them to Fanny, and ask her to set them to music, which she did, always choosing the most vulgar airs, such as "Jim Crow" and other early Negro melodies then popular, which, being played slowly, quite satisfied the Rev. Ingulphus, who thought them charmingly devout. He fasted twice a week; never rode, nor skated, nor played hockey with us on the lawn; in short (though he rather imposed on some of the girls in the house), we men all voted him a prig and a spoon, and none seemed to take a more decided view of him in that light than my charming Fanny.

Well, Christmas came, and we had the mummers in from the village, and the yule-log in the great hall fireplace, and a dance afterwards under the mistletoe—under that very mistletoe of which a dried-up sprig is now lying on my table. I had been riding with Fanny in the morning, and I thought I had done everything but pop the question. I danced with her the first country dance, and I kissed her under this very mistletoe, and I determined to settle the matter that night, come what would.

Towards the close of the ball—for we kept it up very late that night—I looked in vain for Fanny. Nobody had seen her for the last dance or two. The Rev. Ingulphus was missing too; but as he had strongly entreated the affair altogether, and especially the mistletoe part of the entertainment, which he pronounced a heathenish and Druidic superstition, nobody was surprised at his absence, which was, indeed, rather a relief than otherwise. Where could Fanny be? I felt it would never do to go to bed without settling matters one way or the other. So I went to look for her. The drawingroom communicated with the hall by a billiard-room, and out of the billiard-room was a little morning-

room, which Fanny called hers, but which was common property, for there was always sure to be some fun going on there.

She wasn't in the billiard-room, and her maid was still dancing, so I knew she hadn't gone to bed. As I passed through the billiard-room, on my way to the hall again, big with my great resolve, and the arteries in my temples throbbing like Julian's big drums, I saw a light in the morning-room; the door stood ajar, and heard voices, I listened; indeed, I had only to stop to hear. It was the voice of the Rev. Ingulphus. The tone was as passionate and tender as he could pitch it. In fact, he was in the very heart of a declaration. "Oh! by Jove," I thought to myself, "how I shall make Fanny laugh with this to-morrow. But let me see the lady," and, stealing to the door, I peeped in. They were sitting on a sofa together, very near each other, before the fire. Her back was towards the door, but there were the golden ringlets, and the head was resting on the black shoulder of the Rev. Ingulphus.

That day four months Fanny Hughes was transformed into the Rev. Mrs. Ingulphus.

I have seen her since, accidentally; she is a good deal changed, and I see she will be a coarse woman. She is passionately devout; it is probable that Ingulphus and she will both go over to Rome. On second thoughts, though, I don't know that they will, for he has a good family living from the Hugheses; and as he has an almshouse in the parish with six old men and twelve old women, who don't object to any amount of morning service ("matins," as he calls it), and will go through an incredible quantity of genuflection and other ecclesiastical posture-making on consideration of the very liberal doles which Mrs. Ingulphus is accustomed to serve out at the vicarage to those of the right sort, I shouldn't wonder if he stays where he is, as the bulk of the congregation have "suited themselves," some of them in the parish church of the next village, and some in the dissenting chapels (of which three have sprung up in the parish of the Rev. Ingulphus); and the bishop is an easy-going sort of a man.

And that was what my first mistletoe memory came to.

I didn't bear Fanny any malice, but I don't think I danced much the next year, and I certainly didn't feel disposed to make another trial of a romp. One has no security, I felt, with your fly-away style of woman; though how the Rev. Ingulphus contrived to do it I haven't the slightest notion to this day.

The Christmas after that I spent in Devonshire, not far from Teignmouth, in the grandest scenery of England, at the house of my old uncle Sparshot, a hard-a-weather half-pay admiral, who had married a Devonshire beauty with a good fortune.

Jack Sparshot, my cousin, was a great crony of mine; we were at college together, and I had skinned with him, town and gown rowed with him, been confined to gates with him, tumbled his bed when he slept out of college, and, in short, done all the offices of a Cambridge Orestes to his Pylades. Jack was a good-natured, harum-scarum, black-whiskered, apple-cheeked fellow, with a great deal of the old admiral's sailor-like frankness and kindness, but with no more sentiment in him than an old special pleader. He was a capital shot, a good rider to hounds, and one of the most knowing cattle-breeders in Devonshire. In short, he was the *beau-ideal* of a country gentleman, according to western notions, thinking no more than he could help about anything not immediately growing out of the ground of his own county and his own estate. Among our Christmas party that year

was the widow of an old shipmate of the admiral, Mrs. Topsom, who was staying at Torquay for the benefit, she said, of her daughter Emily's health. Emily was with her mother. She was a tall, pale, slight girl, with soft brown hair, and great tender grey eyes, that looked on every human being, from the knife-boy up to the uncle, with the same impulsive, appealing expression.

By the way, why is it one always describes a woman by her hair and eyes? One always does something as if, these given, everybody could fill up the rest of the picture.

Emily was in delicate health, always had been, her mother said, and she looked frail enough certainly. But I must say that I never could see any trace of the wear and tear of pain in her smooth white brow; and I can answer for it that her appetite was capital. However, she was *enferme* an invalid, and she was such a pretty and interesting invalid, that one couldn't help wishing she might never get quite well; though, at the same time, it was absolutely necessary she should never get any worse.

She used to lie a great deal on the sofa, in the prettiest white cashmere peignoirs, with lots of shawls and burbous about her, draped in the most picturesque way, and two or three times a week she would not appear at dinner, and on these occasions, when we came into the drawing-room, we were sure to find her in the prettiest sort of head-dresses, half veil, half night-cap, all lace and muslin and delicate ribbons, in which she looked a something between odalisque and invalid, that was very bewitching indeed. And then, when you asked after her health, there was such an angelic tone of resignation in her voice, and such a depth of unrevealed suffering in her smile, such a piteous appeal in her great lamp-like grey eyes, with their black lashes, that you felt inclined to clasp her in your arms then and there, and vow to cherish, watch over, and wait upon her to the end of your natural life.

She didn't go out much. Indeed, her chest was so delicate, her mother said, that it was even dangerous for her to change from one room to another without precautions; and, accordingly, when she did migrate, as she occasionally did, to be a spectator of our Christmas gambols, from the drawing-room to the library, she came hooded and shawled, like an Eastern Sultan, leaning with such a delicious pressure on the arm of the happy fellow who had succeeded in winning that place of honour, and sank always into the warmest and softest seat, which, somehow, every body (herself included) seemed to consider hers by right. And then the gentle look of thanks with which she rewarded her cavalier! She gave me two of those looks, and I was done for.

I can't express the tenderness I felt for this suffering angel. How I longed to take her up in my arms, like a delicate lamb, and carry her gently through the rough places of the world! Jack Sparshot, on the contrary, was *brusque* and boisterous with her, as with everybody else. Her suffering seemed to make no impression on his coarse and unscientific nature. He shocked us all dreadfully once, I remember, by suggesting that a good center would do her more good than all the nursing in the world, and actually made the groom put a side-saddle on a young thoroughbred of his own, and brought it round for her, after putting it through its paces on the terrace, to show her how gentle it was—a performance in the course of which he knocked a whole row of stone garden-pots into the ha-ha.

When Christmas came, dear suffering Emily did her best to join in our sports. Dancing was out of the question; but her couch was brought down into the hall, and she lay wrapped in her shadowy draperies and looked on, like a Princess, while we danced before her. When I say "We," I didn't dance myself; I spent the best part of the night leaning over her sofa, drinking in the "light of her eyes," listening to her soft flute-like voice, and thinking that, if angels ever were invalids, they must, while in that state, be uncommonly like Emily Topsom.

There seemed a sort of sacrifice in making love to a creature who appeared always on the point of winging her way to a better and a brighter world. I had never breathed a word of love to Emily, but, if ever a man showed himself over head and ears, by every look of his eyes, every vibration of his voice, and every act of his intercourse with a woman, I was that man. She must have seen it; but she was so sweet, and gentle, and tenderly playful with everybody, that I found me if I could ever quite satisfy myself that she made any difference with any of the half-dozen young fellows who were in the same predicament with myself.

Of course the women hated her. Mary Sparshot, who had a good deal of Jack's coarseness, said, in her slang way, that she was a humbug, if at her delicacy was a "d—d," and called her constitutional tendency to command "the interesting d—d."

But this was not to be wondered at, for Emily had all the men at her feet; and we were never happy unless when we were trotting about on her errands, or doing slavish office about her, one shaking up her pillows, another holding her ear to Cologne, a third fanning her, a fourth re-arranging the shawls over her feet, and so on, till all but Jack Sparshot, who didn't scruple to say to Emily's face much the same style of thing as his sister said behind her back.

Among other pieces of brutality that Christmas-night, he insisted on Emily's joining in the last cotillion, and absolutely succeeded in dragging the poor girl up from the sofa for the purpose. And when it came to the mystic ceremony under the mistletoe—(heigho! there's the epig, labelled with her name and the date)—I was happy enough to have her hand in mine, and, for the first and the last time, I pressed a kiss upon her lips! That brute Jack Sparshot did the same just after me, with a smack like the explosion of a sofa water-bottle. She blushed and appeared disgusted at Jack's; she blushed, but did not appear disgusted at mine. "Oh, what a night I had after that kiss! I mean mine, not Jack's." It was plain that it was no use resisting. People talk about the wretchedness of marrying an invalid wife, of turning one's house into a hospital, and so forth. I felt those who talk so were selfish brutes, and had never known an Emily Topsom.

I determined, come what might, to break it to her the next morning, and to offer my heart and hand, and fortune, such as it was, to promote her happiness. If she wanted a husband to defend her, I was ready. If she required a nurse to wait upon her, I was willing to take the duty. I would live at watering-places on the south coast. I had no objection to go abroad—as far as Madeira. In short, I was ready to be husband, lover, servant, sick-nurse, slave, and family physician, all in one.

When I saw her the next day, Jack Sparshot was leaning over the sofa, coarsely joking with her about his performance on the night before under the mistletoe, and obviously wounding the poor girl's feelings. And there he stuck the whole morning, though the hounds met in the neighbourhood, and there was no frost. I couldn't get an opportunity of thrashing myself and all I had at her feet.

Unluckily a frost set in the day after, and there was no hunting for a week. Jack Sparshot was always hulking about Emily's sofa, and I never could get the door open to myself for a quarter of an hour all that blank week, unless when the room was full of people. At last the frost gave, and it was with indescribable satisfaction that I saw Jack in pink at breakfast. I made an excuse for staying at home; and, as soon as breakfast was over, and everybody scattered, I flew to dear Emily. She lay in a little room, half conservatory, half parlour, which had been christened her *toboggan*, and I thought I had never seen her looking more irresistible than she did among the great white arums and the camellias, whose glossy leaves and bright cornelian blossoms brought out her ethereal style of beauty with tenfold effect. It was one of her "sick" days, too, and she wore one of those bewitching caps which made her loveliness ten times lovelier.

I wasn't master of myself. I did then what I never did before, and what I believe is seldom done by people who make declarations—*if* the stage: I actually went on my knees, and I poured out my devotion in that slavish attitude.

She cast down her lustrous eyes and let me finish, and then in her sweet voice she told me how honoured she felt by my preference, and so forth, but that her hand and heart were promised to another!

And whom do you think they were promised to?

Jack Sparshot, black-whiskered, apple-cheeked, fox-hunting, cattle-breeding, loud-voiced, blustering, hulking Jack Sparshot! Yes; he had done it when I couldn't. And his success puzzled me just as much as the Rev. Ingulphus. They were married in due course. Emily is still lovely, and still an invalid. But Jack Sparshot, I am thankful to say, is no longer jolly, and red-cheeked, and boisterous. He is grown a tamed, spiritless, sneaking

sort of a fellow, something between a groom of the chambers and an apothecary, and spends his life in paying guinea fees to celebrated doctors, and trotting his interesting wife about from watering-place to watering-place; though Emily, I will do her the justice to say, always chooses the pleasantest ones; and the best of the joke is, that he leads his d—cuse of a life, by all accounts, and has always a sort of sympathetic round her, who considers him as a brute, and her as a victim, and don't scruple to tell him so indirectly, and she encourages them in it, though nobody knows better than she does who is the victim in that *l'ame*—l'ame.

So I was well rid of my interesting invalid after all. She was, in fact, a very finished performer of precisely the same line of character, though on a higher stage, as the gentleman with a white nightcap on, who chatters "I am starving" on the flag, and takes sudden fits in the presence of well-known good Samaritans, unless there happens to be a policeman in sight.

However, I didn't know all this till a good many years after Emily became Mrs. Sparshot, and I won't pretend to say that I didn't feel an aching void for many a month after that morning in Emily's boudoir. And now, have you still a mind for a third mistletoe memory? I believe I am an awful warnin', in some way or other, though I don't exactly know what; so I don't mind going on in the hope that what I write may be useful to persons about to marry."

Did you ever spend a winter at Boulogne? If you haven't you've no notion how dreary that is, when it's too cold for bathing, and too windy for walking on the jetty; when, as a rule, there's nobody staying in the place but those who've made every other place too hot to hold them; and when there is nobody in the steamers whom one may have the fear of seeing on land, and when everybody who does land bears traces of recent sea-sickness, and when the ball-room at that establishment, down on the pâne, is shut up, and you sometimes can't get any fish for a week together; and when, if it's a gale, you see the *paix* fishermen's wives and sisters in an agony of fear, saying their prayers to *Notre Dame de Bon Secours*, and, in short, when everything about is as much the reverse of jolly as it is possible to conceive. Well, I spent the winter of 18—*even* cannot expect me to give the final figure, I am sure) at Boulogne, not because I couldn't leave it, but on account of the severe illness of a travelling companion with whom I had made a tour in Switzerland and Italy, and who knocked up on our road home.

I was determined, like Mark Tapley, to be jolly under the severe difficulties of the situation, as the French say; so I went everywhere, made acquaintance with everybody—that is, everybody that was not tabbed by the police and the English Protestant clergymen (two very safe detectors), and made excursions to Port; and picked up a sort of acquaintance with the *fishermen*, and made a little quiet old English life in the pretty *maisons*, in an innocent way; and, in short, extorted the utmost enjoyment I could from every thing about me. There was a knot of presentable English there still, as I have said, and it was devised amongst us, as Christians drew on, that we should assemble at the *avant* and pleasantest house of the set, for a regular John Bull Christmas dinner, and a Christmas-night's fun after it.

I may as well own at once, that I had, as usual, found an attraction, in the shape of a woman; even in this winter waste of Boulogne. This was a Mrs. Wyndham Effingham, who had been married in India, and was now at Boulogne for the education of her two children, a boy and a girl. She wasn't more than twenty, as she had been that time in England, left a widow about four years, as she had been then in India, and she told me, Mrs. Wyndham Effingham! the woman was suspicious certainly—but I met her constantly at English Protestant clergymen's, the very citadel of Boulogne's *répectability*; and, besides, the two children were *garanties* in their way.

Now, Fanny Hughes had cured me of romps, and Emily Topsom of interesting invalids, but I found in Mrs. Wyndham Effingham a woman who just fitted that miserable niche in my heart, never vacant for a time, ever vacant for a permanence. Maria (as she reappears to me under that name) was a pretty, black-eyed, agreeable, energetic, sensible blonde, clearly a woman who had had her difficulties in life, and had pulled through them by dint of a pleasant face, a good heart, and a great deal of common sense. It struck me as odd that she never alluded to her husband. I concluded it was one of the common cases of an Indian marriage consignment, and that she had no particularly tender reminiscences of her pur baser.

I made her acquaintance through her boy, a sturdy youngster of some seven years old, whom I one day found in the fish-market defying to the comb a fair French boy, each bigger than himself, because they had called him a "*jeune goudain*." The abominable *maisons*, instead of taking the poor little hero's part, were egging on their cowardly young compatriots to go in and win, which they seemed no way inclined to do, the French youth having a mysterious dread of even the tiniest pair of English fists. Still, it would have fared ill, I fear, with little Willy Effingham if he had come to the rescue, and cuffed the young rascals who were insulting him. Fearing that the French boys might follow and waylay him, I took him home with him to his mamma's (who had a very handsome apartment in the Rue de l'Ecole), and consigned him to Mrs. Effingham, whom I had met before, as I have said, and had indeed, been introduced to at the English clergymen's.

I was struck by her honest and daily bread grace and good sense, and I must confess I saw her afterwards as often as I could decently contrive a pretext for doing so. And Boulogne is a town like Brighton, where one may always make sure of meeting all one's acquaintances in the place so often that it becomes a sort of a pass to them, as one never knows whether to go by with a bow, or a smile, or a word on the weather, or without taking any notice whatever.

Mrs. Wyndham Effingham and I accordingly became fast friends. She consulted me a good deal about her children's education, which, I must say, appealed to me to consult closely in a continued course of bad French and haricot beans; and I used to ask her advice about my friend's ailment, which was one of a kind (she said), "My husband used to be much subject to India." "Died of it, probably?" I thought to myself; but of course I felt a delicacy of intruding on the subject. I never heard anything of the late Mr. Effingham, but in allusion to this complaint. No doubt he had been a horrid, sallow, wizened old Quibby, with a cotton shirt and mackintosh trousers. I couldn't help drawing a momentary comparison between my idea of the late Effingham and myself, and I felt comfortable.

Mrs. Effingham was of our Christmas party—the life and soul of the occasion. I remember we sang "God save the Queen" with a fervour of loyalty of which we had never conceived ourselves capable before; and "Rule Britannia" was chorused in a style of blustering defiance that was really unpardonable, considering we were in France. We were all a good deal astir after dinner, and there was an exaggerated amount of God-blessing and shaking hands, among slight acquaintances, which I never could quite account for in a rational way.

Our Christmas dance was a *gros*—success. We invited some of our French friends to it, and the interest they took in the ceremonial, the frantic way in which they assisted in bringing in the log, and their ecstatic delight at the *poche flambeau* with the snap-dragons, and the desperate efforts they made to drink "wass-ha" and "trink-ha" in the Saxon manner, are things not to be described. Neither can I adequately convey an idea of the dance performed by one of our French visitors, a furious *Anglomane*, who had once, unfortunately for himself, been to Scotland, and had seen the sports of what he called *Montagnards*, and who on this occasion gave us a French version of the Highland fling, with variations—oh, I may charitably suppose, to the punch. I believe, if a *sergent de ville* had been there, he would have spent the night in the nearest *vistor*, for as the French call their station-houses.

But the triumph of the evening with both French and English was certainly the mistletoe. I never saw the oeser privileges of that plant more divinely drawn upon than that night in the old town of Boulogne. The way those Frenchmen entered into the spirit of this part of the entertainment with "*les jeans ness*," as they persisted in calling every lady in the room under forty, was perfectly startling. I am glad to say, however, that I succeeded in preserving my pretty widow's cherries intact—I mean for my own private use. I was the only man who kissed Mrs. Wyndham Effingham's lips under that mistletoe. I believe I was the first that offered to do so, and she seemed rather taken aback.

Before I left the house that night I had determined to turn this pre-

ference to account; and, after carefully weighing the pros and cons—under which latter head Master and Miss Effingham cut a large figure—I determined to avow my passion next morning, and ask the widow's hand. Next day was pleasant and sunshiny. I met her on the jetty; her roses not a bit faded by the late hours of the night before.

The Dover steamer was just smoking in between the piers, as in a few hurried words I told her the state of my affections, my family, and my advantages, personal and contingent, to her acceptance. She blushed—that I expected; and then she laughed—which I did not expect; and then she was apparently about to make an apology for laughing—for I suppose I looked annoyed—when suddenly fixing her eyes on the scanty and sea-side passengers who were clambering up the ladder on to the jetty, near which we stood, she gave a short scream, slunk under the *donave* ropes like a diver, and before I had time to close my mouth, which had opened involuntarily in my amazement, she was hysterically hugging a lathy gentleman, with a yellow face and a large cloak, who seemed rather embarrassed at this passionate recognition, at which the grinning *donave* and gaping *matelotes* "assisted" (as the French say) with much apparent satisfaction.

Owing to a sort of mechanical impulse, I had followed her to the ropes; and judge of my feelings when, releasing the tall gentleman, she turned, and introduced to me—Mr. Wyndham Effingham, her husband!

She wasn't a widow, after all—only a grass-widow, as the Irish call it—one of those very little married Indian wives who come home with the children, after a few years' marriage, leaving her husband to feather his nest and ruin his constitution in Burhampton, or Hyderbad, or Badgery-wollah, as the case may be.

It was too bad. She ought to have mentioned him sooner; but she told me afterwards she hadn't the slightest idea—didn't know she had a live husband, and, moreover, had no conception I didn't know anything for her warmer than friendship. Now, what the deuce is it in me that will not allow women to see when I'm in love with them? They never do, somehow, and now, I suppose, they never will; and that's the reason why I still continue to subscribe myself

"THE OLD BACHELOR."

MISS HENNY.

BY CALDER CAMPBELL.

In the old, very clean, not very large, but very dull "borrowstoun," in the north of Scotland, where almost the whole of that educational system which was intended to fit me for the common arithmetical and grammatical requirements of life was carried on, there was one small street, wider than the others perhaps, which certainly contained houses of a more antique build, amongst which not a shop was to be found, whose interest rested upon the number of ancient unmarried females of a respectable rank in society that resided in it. We wicked urchins of the Grammar School called it Old Maid-street; and, if there was a locality in all N——, that abounded with more modest worth, more genuine charity, more practical usefulness than any other, it was that very street. I affirm this at the outset of my sketch, lest by any chance, fair readers, you should turn from it as containing nothing but a commonplace *diaconie* against a class of women which I reverence, and in which I have found individuals possessing every feminine endowment that can grace the mind. I have discovered amongst "old maids" such qualifications of intellect—and, where the brightest lights of intellect were wanting, of heart-goodness—as justify almost any amount of praise I may be inclined to lavish on them.

There were actually eleven spinsters in that street, not one of whom was reproached by such condemnatory epithets as are by some considered to be the fitting attributes of the race. People said that, if a twelfth intruded into the charmed circle, the harmony that was known to prevail amongst them would evaporate. Not unlikely, since a straw may light a conflagration; and the first permitted plant of ragwort may fill the farmer's field with many weeds; but luckily, in my youthful days, the original number remained unaltered. There was not one of these women who could lay claim to the very uninteresting title of "faultless monster;" there was not one who had not a natural freckle on her temper, a human wrinkle on her disposition; there were even one or two—perhaps more—who had fewer beauties than defects in their mental construction; but where will you find the perfectly spotless drift of snow? As soon as it has reached the earth, there will something belonging to that earth mingle with it, either springing from its couch, downfalling from its canopy, or windwarded to it by atmospheric influences.

Amongst them, however, was one who became at a very early stage of my existence an object of peculiar interest to me. Not wholly unmercenary was my predilection for Miss Henny, for she was the dear and consistent friend of my own favourite cousin Jessie—herself an old maid now, and one who has won love and regard from all who knew her by a steady course of usefulness, piety, and benevolence. Besides this, Miss Henny had many ways of winning the affection of a boy whose natural inclinations tended strongly towards the creature comforts of *buns*, *marmalade*, and *floury scones* covered with honey. Above all, she had a room of books, which she not only loved to read herself, but which she loved to lend to others to read, provided great care was taken of them. Now, I was as fond of reading all sorts of old-fashioned books as I was of feasting on short-bread; and to her I owe my first impressions of nature derived from St. Pierre, my first worship of ideal harmony gleaned from Spenser; my first sermons, but not gloomy, views of religion from Flavel's quaint and gentle pages. I should not forget, that among those books were a few of a description that acted upon my mind with a sort of fascination not altogether wholesome. There were some old black-letter romances: Mrs. Radcliffe's "Udolpho," Charlotte Smith's "Solitary Wanderer," Mrs. Roche's "Children of the Abbey" and "Evelina," then actually a new book, at least in our part of the world.

Miss Henny Rose at this time might have been some fifty years of age. In figure she was large, robust, muscular; I used to think she would have made a capital drill-surgeon; she stood so erect, and insisted so strenuously upon every one else doing the same. Her face had no beauty derivative from contour of features; the latter, indeed, were masculine; and a *soupon* of moustache, which seemed but a shadow of her thick, black eyebrows, began to invigilate the upper lip of a mouth somewhat large in itself, but garnished with very white and even teeth and a smile that was very sweet and not unpleasing. Her eyes were black and large; their expression at times was that of intense long-drawn-out sadness; it seemed as if she were looking at something beyond that outward object upon which they were fixed; and, as she sat abstracted in this position, I have watched her from the low window seat, where I used to recline of an evening until my thoughts of what hers might be have startled me. A serious smile was often in those eyes, but it was evident that tears had been no unfamiliar things, though a sort of tranquillity was their now general expression. Yet, when aroused by indignation at what she deemed unworthy conduct, I have seen them light up with a fire that betrayed the existence of feelings as present but not extinguished. She was without any living relations, having been the only child of a poor but proud Highland gentleman, on whose death she became heiress to some property which brought her in about £100 annually. And truly she

was considered rich by many of her sisterhood in the neighbourhood, though to hoard her wealth in bank or coffer was not her forte. She was quietly and judiciously charitable, and the real delight she took in doing good taught her a financial economy not natural to her free and liberal character. Miss Henny's chief self-indulgence was to assemble a party of young folks to what we used to call "a grand tea." A few elderly persons were always there, but the feast was awfully prepared for her juvenile guests, and it is wonderful how mirthful she became in ministering to the mirth of others, and with what ease she prevented gaiety from degenerating into boisterous romping. And what tea she gave us! Never since have I drunk such tea, not even in that Eastern land where, fresh and fragrant from China, the aroma it exhalas, as the catty containing it is opened, perfumes the saloon. Yes, once I drank of "the cup that cheers, but not inebriates," and acknowledged it equal to that of Miss Henny's brewing. It was prepared by Mrs. Leigh Hunt, and sent down to us by her to her husband's study as "tea, just as she used to make it for Keats!"

Then the accessories to Miss Henny's tea were choice and delicate; the wholesome brown bread sliced and covered with the best, richest, primrose-hued butter of Strathspey, flour scones, hot and well-buttered oatmeal bannocks, crisp, and sweet with marmalade or honey! Merry games followed our innocent feasts; sometimes, too, a little dance, for an ancient spinnet stood in the room, and there was always some one who could play a reel, or, may be, a country dance. Sometimes one of the girls would sing old ballads, such as "Barbara Allen," or the "Heir of Lynn;" and sometimes, in the long winter evenings, we would gather round the fire, and listen to such stories as fairly made our young hearts leap within us. We had tales of witch and of warlock, of water-kelpies that sang sweetly on the brown waters of the Nairn till the traveller drew near, when, with discordant shrieks, the fiendish creature "meled awa' neath the water, cocking its tail up just like a big skat." We had traditions of haunted cairns, and of Highland raids; of fairies heard on the hill side by the shepherd, who, putting his ear to the roots of the bracken, heard the sound of their voices; and of tasks that tell of the common avocations of life—the pouring of water from pail to pan, the kneading of bannocks, and the whirling of spinning-wheels. There were love stories too; but more about ghosts, and of the *Bodach nan Clochán*, or Old Man in the Mantle, that is known to sit on the grey rocks of Ardchad, and on the moors of Braemoray, though Miss Henny insisted that it was nothing but a monstrous bird. In those modern days poor Miss Henny would have been sorely condemned, for encouraging the legendary lore which followed her cakes and cream. But we took no harm that ever I could discover; and, if I continue to cling to a little belief in the supernatural to this day, it can conscientiously assert that it has at no time caused me the slightest discomfort.

"If I had minded that this was the 1st of August, I should not have invited you here to-night," said Miss Henny, at the breaking up of one of her parties, as she helped my cousin Jeanie out with her cloak; "you ken what happened to me long ago, my dear? Ay, ay; well, I should be thankful that I have forgotten it myself. But God is good! He makes us to remember, and he makes us to forget even as He thinks it is best for us! It was a sore grief to me, many a day, but the guilt of blood, or of the desire to shed it, was never upon my soul. God bless you, bairns, and dinna think o' what I have been saying to Miss Jeanie." The latter part of this speech was addressed to a few young people, who like myself had heard with some wonder the who o' what had been said; nor had we passed our threshold before we began to descend on it, as we followed our senior up the long lace that led past the kirk.

"I should like to know what melancholy occurrence Miss Rose alluded to, as being connected with this day," said I to my companion, a very pretty girl whom I generally contrived to escort home on similar occasions.

"I think I do know," replied Mary Ann; "but boys should never be told such things, they always make fun of them."

"Maka fun of what?" cried I; "besides, I am not such a boy, after all. I am to get a cadetship next year, and perhaps when I wear a red jacket—"

"Ked jacket, pooh!" said she, rather disdainfully I thought "it would have been better if Miss Henny had never seen one. Why, it was an officer that she—but I had better hold my tongue."

"Good gracious, Ma Yann! You are quite mysterious to-night. You surely don't mean to say that she murdered a soldier?"

"Well," admitted Mary Ann, "they do say that she somehow killed an officer—he was a real captain; but by all accounts he quite deserved his fate."

I had no time to investigate the claims of the real captain to be slain by lady hands, for we reached our adjoining abodes, and parted for the night. But it was not long before I gatht ed, from my cousin Jeanie the revelations of Miss Rose's history—a simple story, 'tut true, which I shall relate in my own way.

Kate of Roseburn, in Ross-shire, the father of my heroine, had run through a considerable property, in the manner then, as now, peculiar to *first* men. He had married a woman as extravagantly inclined as himself; and when she died, leaving Henrietta to the care of her husband's sister, it was fortunate for the poor motherless girl that she fell into such excellent hands as those of Mrs. Cameron, who, herself a woman of strong understanding, sincere piety, and practical sense, brought up her niece to be a useful and amiable member of society; so that on her decease, which happened when Henrietta was in her twenty-fifth year, she had the satisfaction of knowing that she had done her duty by the girl, and that the annuity she had settled upon her was safe, judiciously placed beyond the reach of her reckless brother. Mrs. Cameron had resided for many years at Roseburn, where the influence she exercised over the laird was not without those beneficial results which, more or less, conduct and temper are sure to command. But on her death the frivolous and dissipated habits of the man again broke forth, unrestrained by any feelings of regard for his daughter, who had some difficulty in prevailing upon a maiden relative to come and reside with her, whose presence might in some measure protect her from the society of the troop of lawless and ill-mannered guests whom her father encouraged to spend night and day at the hall. About a year after the death of her aunt, a certain Lieutenant Murdoch was introduced to her by her father, as an officer on furlough from his regiment, then in the Peninsula. Mr. Murdoch was a handsome man, some forty years of age; and how it came to pass nobody knew, but it was that he became violently smitten with Miss Henny, who, though by no means beautiful, possessed coolness, good nature, and good sense. In after days, Miss Henny was wont to declare that her heart never fully responded to a warmth of affection, which was yet flattering, if not appreciated; but circumstances threw them together; and, believing that he was the most respectable and best behaved of her father's associates, she at last consented to become his wife in the course of two years, provided nothing occurred in the meantime to alter her favourable opinion. Murdoch professed himself satisfied, as he owned that, for a year or two, his means would not enable him to marry.

His stay at Ross-shire lasted six months after they had come to this understanding; but, long before he went away, circumstances had occurred to strengthen Henrietta's conviction that she had acted prudently in postponing the certain promise of her hand. Reports reached her of the former life of dissipation led by Murdoch, and she was disengaged from ever fulfilling her engagement by in-assertions that insanity prevailed in his family. To these whispers Henrietta turned a deaf ear, but she could not conceal from herself that of late the lieutenant had become the inseparable companion of her father, in all his wildest escapades. They spent weeks together at Inverness, whence they were sure to return with empty purses and tarnished reputations. They played billiards or cards, chess, and, drank whisky punch until each night ended in noisy intoxication; and at length they took up fox-hunting in their cups, till one afternoon, after a mad scamper over heath and hill, Mr. Rose was brought home senseless from a fall, from the effects of which he never recovered.

Leaving a penitential letter, replete with such promises as none are so ready to make as men who contemplate no reform, Murdoch left Roseburn for Inverness, whence he speedily departed to join his regi-

ment. Henrietta read the plethora of protestations with a cold heart and a contemptuous lip; she felt that she had never loved the man, and cared not to think of him. Her father died within a few weeks after the accident, and, but for the generous precautions of Mrs. Cameron, Henrietta would have been almost a beggar. Her father died insolvent, Roseburn was hers no longer, and before the year was over, fresh disclosures and discoveries were made of the utter profligacy of the absent lieutenant, which induced her to despatch a letter to him, putting a complete end to all matrimonial speculations between them. In the course of time she heard that his relations in Inverness had received intelligence of his promotion, but that he had been compelled to sell out. Habits of inebriety had become so frequent that he was advised to quit the army, as the only means of escape from impending expulsion by court-martial—a severe wound in the head, received in action, and whilst gallantly encouraging his advancing men, entitled him to some degree of favor, and he was allowed to sell his commission. His castle home, a total wreck, and his relatives ascribed his dissolute habits, which they termed eccentricity, to insanity; but the truth of the matter was, that he was a confirmed drunkard. There is a class of pseudo-benevolent apologists for vice, who rank all vice as proofs of insanity; it is a false and dangerous theory, for insanity is a disease of the *intellectual* nature; whereas vice, having no taint of the insane, is wholly evidence of *moral* disorder.

Henrietta Rose had retired with her aged relative to a neat little cottage near Dingwall, and a most unwelcome visitor there was Captain Murdoch! He denied having received her letter, and urged his suit with indecent obstinacy that would listen to no word of denial or rebuke. Resolutely and civilly Henrietta acquainted him with her full cognizance of his misconduct, and declaring that she neither loved nor esteemed him, requested him to withdraw. The scene that ensued was terrible. Murdoch retired a few hours, but returned in such a state of frantic intoxication that Miss Rose was obliged to summon the assistance of some men who were working in the fields near her cottage, and it was only by force that he was ejected from her disturbed dwelling. In the greatest alarm of repeated intrusion she accepted the invitation of a worthy minister, whose manse, situated in a wild hilly country, was some miles from Dingwall, and here she and her cousin owed the enjoyment of several tranquil weeks to the hospitality of her host and his wife.

But the time was close at hand when tranquillity was to be dispelled. One fine forenoon in early August, Miss Henny, who had been walking with the minister through his corn-fields—beginning to yellow in the late harvest of Ross-shire—left him at a little bothy in the glen, where a sick parishioner claimed his kind offices, whilst she pursued her way up a steep rocky path that led to a mountain cairn, said to be the last resting-place of a celebrated robber who there met his death in the olden times. Henny had not hitherto visited this spot, where Mr. Matheson promised to join her, and she had reached it, and sat herself down to rest her limbs wearied with the ascent, whilst she admiringly surveyed the extent of wild and romantic country visible from her exalted position. The cairn was nothing but a huge accumulation of grey stones, singularly enough placed on a jutting corner of the rock, which in this place was completely bare of vegetation, though beneath it verdure flourished rankly at a great depth, nurtured by the irrigation of a brown hill stream which no summer's heat had power to dry up. Opposite the cairn, across the narrow glen or ravine, there was a long stretch of steep cliff-land—not so high, indeed, as the promontory on which Henrietta rested herself, but shaggy with tufted shrubs and hazel trees laden with ripening nuts. Along the sides of these brows ran a little track that led as well as the steeper path by which she had ascended to the cairn, extending laterally behind it and diverging thence into several branches. As Henny sat there, she was aware of a movement among the hazels on the opposite ridge, and presently saw a figure emerge from the copse, into which, however, it again disappeared. She thought no more of it, concluding it to be some peasant looking for early nuts, and had, indeed, reverted to meditations that were seldom idle or selfish, when a loud laugh behind her, and the tramp of feet, and then the pressure of rude hands on her shoulders, frightened her into the utterance of a shrill cry, reiterated when she found herself held by Murdoch, his eyes inflamed by drink or delirium, his dress in ragged disorder, and his hands and face distorted by filth and neglect.

After the first intensity of her terror had in some degree subsided, finding that her struggles to release herself were in vain, she endeavoured to soothe him by gentle entreaties; but he continued to laugh the idiotic laugh of drunkenness, as he insisted on carrying her down the cliff in his arms.

"You are now my brid—" said he; "you break no more promises with me, for if you do not let me carry you now to the minister down there to be married, I swear to you that I'll jump with you in my arms down from the cairn to the glen!"

And as he spoke, he flung her in his arms, till she shuddered lest he should indeed be tempted to put his threat into execution.

At that moment a shot was fired at no great distance, and Murdoch's grasp relaxed for a moment. In the next, Henrietta had extricated herself at the expense of his dress, a portion of which remained in his hand. Staggering wildly from him, she sprang across the ledge of the cliff on which rested the outward part of the cairn, and found herself in a position so perilous that her brain whirled as she gazed around her. In advance of her, at a very few paces distance, the path ended abruptly in a mass of dry perpendicular cliff, which she could neither ascend nor pass; below her descended the bare sheet of rock, at least sixty feet; the cairn divided her from her assailant, and already he was near at hand, for she stood panting on the narrow space which lay between her and destruction, he appeared at the top of the cairn, and in another moment was again beside her.

If he laughed fondly, pointing to the opposite ridge of hazel, Henrietta's eyes fell upon the form of Mr. Matheson, and she uttered a cry for help. He was proceeding slowly to join her by the track across the glen which conducted to the cairn through the hazel copse. He heard her cry, and saw her situation; but the circuitous nature of the path would prevent him from reaching her in less than ten minutes, and in ten minutes what might not happen? But he hurried on, whilst a fearful struggle commenced on that dangerous mountain-side. Henrietta was robust and muscular, and, in repelling Murdoch's attempt to seize her round the waist, clutched his right wrist with a force so convulsive, that, his feet at the same time coming against a block of rugged slate, he slipped, and fell on his knees, dragging her down with him, until her head almost rested on his shoulder. As they thus wrestled, both panting both silent, two other individuals appeared on the spot so recently occupied by the minister, and the spectacle they beheld seemed to rivet them in terror to the ground they stood on. They beheld what Murdoch himself had no cognizance of; they saw that he knelt on the very brink of the precipice, to which his back was turned, and down which glared the terrified eyes of Henrietta, in full consciousness of their impending doom. At that instant one of these spectators, impelled by some impulse, and in opposition to the desire of his comrade, raised his fowling-piece, and, levelling at the cairn directly above where Murdoch and his victim crouched, discharged it with a loud report, which then, as before, had the effect of loosening Murdoch's grasp. Suddenly withdrawing her hold of his wrist, she pushed him from her with her whole force, and fell back herself, insensible, on the rock. Fortunate insensibility! for it saved her from the fate which awaited Murdoch, whose left arm, snatched from her by the weight with which she came to the ground, was no longer linked with her body. He started on his feet, the better to regain his hold of her, but, heedless of the chasm behind him, stepped back, and—fell!

When they came to look for him they found but his body—a shattered and formless mass! Henrietta was conveyed, in a deep swoon, by Mr. Matheson and the two gentlemen, who happened to be neighbours, to the manse, where for many days a violent brain fever threatened her life. But she recovered, as we know, although for months, nay, years, she was afflicted with a deep melancholy, which yielded at length to time and the ploughings of kind and judicious friends. She became at last convinced that she was no murderer; and, in riving the true uses of affliction, that it is sinful to forget our duties to others in our indulgence of selfish sorrows, she became gradually the cheerful, charitable, busy, and helpful Christian we all loved so well.

Dear Miss Henny was eighty-four years of age when a short illness carried her off; but she retained her sense to the last, submissively enduring the pains of a severe agony, and resting with a cheerful faith on the consolations of a creed which fortifies us in weakness and softens us in sorrow.

NATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS.

SHAKESPEARE, with that intuitive perception which in him was so remarkable, sometimes hits off a characteristic difference in a single word. Not seldom, as illustrates, in this manner, the entire distinction between two nations. Thus, in regard to the French and English character, the *Dauphin*, in "Henry VI," is made by him to demand of Sir William Lucy—

On what submissive message art thou sent?

Whereto the latter, in the true spirit of his country, replies—

Submission, Dauphin! 'tis a mere French word;

We English warriors wot not what it means.

Herein consists the superior independence shown in the history of the English people, compared with that of the French. In the world's revolutions, it is England that has set the example; those of France, with the exception of this last unparalleled Napoleon demonstration, have been, but re-enactments of drama which had been previously rehearsed on the English stage. The people of England will not tolerate the notion of submission, but have ever been the first, in modern history, to cast off the yoke of oppression. They have no patience with tyranny to be free. But this determination implies a previous state of mind—the possession of the highest faculties in the individuals who compose the nation—the whole of those qualities that go to constitute manhood or bravery. There is, in particular, self-concentration implied—a personal reliance on interior conviction—and a correlative resistance to mere authority, which remarkably distinguishes an Englishman. It is the truth that makes him free, it is because it makes him, at the same time, independent; and he knows truth, not by report, but because he is a true man. An Englishman, in this respect, as an incarnation (so to speak) of truth, becomes as it were an oracle to his race; and thus it is that he takes the initiative in the march of Freedom.

With the Frenchman it is, for the most part, the reverse of this. He depends much more on the approbation of his neighbour, and that in an inverse ratio to his self-esteem. Undecided in his own convictions, and insecure in his own character, he lives rather in the opinion of his fellow-men, than maintains an independent existence of his own. He is a poor actor frittering and strutting his hour on life's stage, who would perish if not applauded. The applause may come from the demons in the pit, the "human mortals" in the boxes, or the gods in the galleries; but it is all the same; it is still applause. Our bistrongisms may not command the praise of a Hazlitt, but it will of the call-boy. To most Frenchmen it would be indifferent either. There are some who would aim at both, and evince sufficient vigour to secure both. There are time-servers and placemen, who make a point of suiting themselves to their company, and are for the occasion whatever it requires. They live to please, and so that they are pleased in return, seem to themselves to fulfil the duty for which they live.

Perhaps, after all, however, this distinction between the two countries is too broadcast. "There are lions out of Britain;" there are also good and honest men in all countries. France possesses many men of moral and intellectual independence; England also harbours many a parasite, many a craven—

That lets "I dare not" wait upon "I would,"

Like the poor cat i'th' stage.

No doubt, this is the case; nevertheless, let us have been unjust in our national characteristics, our distinction must yet be maintained as between individuals. One man is proud, and another vain. That relies on his own judgment; this depends on his neighbour's approbation. That works for his own satisfaction; this for the recompence of reward. These broad outlines of character are very important. The former individual will devote himself to a cause, even to martyrdom; the latter will seek exclusively his own interest. The one stands alone; the other herds with the crowd; the one erect, like a "column of true majesty," resolved, bold, and unyieldable; the other crouching, collapsed, fearful, and ever changing. You can depend upon the one, because he depends upon himself; on the other none can depend, not even himself.

If, however, on the one hand, there is something profoundly derogatory in an excessive love of approbation, there is, on the other, frequently a repulsive and disagreeable acerbity in a predominance of self-esteem. A character thoroughly amiable will blend the opposite attributes. Men like Woodworth, who have been blest with the consciousness of superior power, have frequently been found erring by reason of this one-sidedness; while a Goethe, acting in a more social spirit, more readily gained over to himself the suffrages of contumacious critics. We should respect others as well as ourselves. Society is a bundle of relations; nay, if we believe certain philosophers, the world itself is nothing more—man is nothing more. At all events, we know that "one touch of nature makes the whole world kin." This "one touch of nature" let us seek to cultivate, and concur to a common fellowship. Nothing becomes the highest genius so much as the grace of conciliation.

The spirit of liberty itself requires that there should be mutual concessions. Out of this arises the expediency of law. Our spontaneous require regulation. Life is of itself a method, and morality nothing but the manner in which it is spiritually developed. We owe a duty to our inferior brethren, which we should be always willing to pay. There is one great reason for this which constantly prevails with us all—generosity. The less gifted take from us many a bairn; they bestow for us the yoke which, if it gall not them, would us. Let us think continually of the saying of the elder Napoleon, "Respect the bairn!" The burthens borne by this class are various; some of them of Nature's appointing; the burthen of incapacity—what a burthen! Some are born knots; mysterious dispensations! Should we not bear with him who had to bear the burthen of idiocy? Then there are the evils imposed by society, such as exclusion from the means of knowledge. The highly-gifted should bear with the different degrees of ignorance. Let such recollect that they are teachers, others are the taught. If there should be docility on the one part, there should be amentity on the other. The crowd, too, as deficient in self-reliance, are specially open to the love of approbation; of this the teacher may take advantage. We would not, therefore, have the British people flattered, as if they were a French mob; but we would have the truth spoken to them, only in a spirit of condescension, and also such commendation bestowed on their efforts as their earnestness might merit. And thus by a reciprocation of the charities, the greatest amount of benefit may be realised, both to the man of superior talents and those whom he would have to be his discipiles.

To superior genius, after all, the task ought not to be a hard one. As a productive power, its highest acts are the offspring of spontaneous benevolence. Let the same sentiment be carried out in its other relations, and to its ultimate results, and the desirable harmony—the octave of the high and low—will be simultaneously produced.

There are, of course, other attributes besides those I have mentioned, by which character is distinguishable. Our faculties are legion; they are indeed infinite for number and excellence. It is on this account that no specimen man can exhibit therein their perfect combination; so that we fail to perceive any in the integrity of his nature. Every individual thus falls short of the Standard of Humanity. Thus every specimen is incomplete, because whatever faculties are exhibited, many more are concealed. Here, then, the highest and lowest are reduced to a sort of equality. Neither realizes the ideal perfection of which man, in the aggregate, is held to be capable; but every man puts forth the general idea only in parts and fragments. This sense of general defect should teach humility even to the richest in nature or fortune's gift. Genius itself is only a progressive instance (to use a Biblical phrase) of this defect. It is a development of certain faculties to the prejudice of others—a manifestation of aptitude in some particular direction. Let us reflect that this is a phenomenon sometimes significantly exemplified in into & out; and that thus the extremes of intellectual energy and weakness meet in a common property. For both there is evidently an appointed channel. Take either out of its appropriate elements, and it perishes; neither can exchange its sphere with the other; and, doubtless, the ideal equality with the past, has its last to perform, though we fail to perceive it, even to understand it. The scale of both—Creation is marked, the end of both determined, by one and the same great Authority and Original.

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PROFESSOR OF MUSIC AT THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD.

MUSICAL SUPPLEMENT.]

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 20, 1851.

[GRATIS.

SONGS.

THE BARLEY AND THE HOP.

[AIR—"The Curly-headed Ploughboy."]

I.

'TWAS in the morning early,
The grass was wet with dew,
That young and lusty Barley
Went o'er the fields to woo.
His cheek was like the cherry,
His beard like threaded gold,
His laugh was loud and merry,
His step was brisk and bold.
He sought his lady, smiling,
And falling on his knee,
Exclaim'd, "Without beguiling,
I've come to marry thee!"

II.

Oh, modest was the maiden,
And comely to be seen,
Her robes of green array'd in,
And gemm'd with diamond sheen.
Her hair, in ringlets yellow,
Hung clus'ring o'er her eyes;
Her breath was sweet and mellow,
Like balm of summer skies.
"Sweet maid!" quoth he, "thy beauty
Excels the flaunting Vine!
To love thee is a duty;
I die to make thee mine!"

III.

All blushing to behold him,
She strove to answer, "Nay!"
But softly whisp'ring, told him
To name the happy day.
Hop shook her golden tresses,
The bearded Barley sprang,
And birds in green recesses
Their bridal chorus sang.
Long may this couple flourish
In ev'ry frothing can,
Our drooping strength to nourish,
And cheer the heart of man!

IF HIS HEART NEVER THROBB'D WITH AFFECTION.

[AIR—"Poor Robin's Maggot;" or, "If the Heart of a Man."]

I.

If his heart never throb'd with affection sincere,
If his eyes never glisten'd with sympathy's tear,
If still unrelenting
To Guilt, that repenting
Implored him, with sobs, not to strike, but to hear;
Untarnish'd his fame and his honour may shine,
And the praises of thousands his worth may enshrine;
But I shall not, I may not,
I will not, I dare not,
Consent to receive him as lover of mine.

II.

But if he be modest, pure-minded, and true,
If from faults of his own his best sympathies grew;

If warm in his feeling,

To Sorrow appealing,

He pities and loves where the harsh might pursue;
Unknown to the world, he may wander apart,
At the sound of his name no applauses may start;
But I shall not, I may not,
I will not, I dare not,
Refuse him my friendship, my hand, and my heart.

I LAY IN SORROW, DEEP DISTRESS'D.

[AIR—"Hey, Boys, up go we."]

I LAY in sorrow, deep distress'd.

My grief a proud man heard;
His looks were cold, he gave me gold,
But not a kindly word.
My sorrow pass'd;—I paid him back
The gold he gave to me;
Then stood erect and spoke my thanks,
And bless'd his Charity.

II.

I lay in want, in grief and pain:
A poor man pass'd my way;
He bound my head, he gave me bread,
He watch'd me night and day.
How shall I pay him back again
For all he did to me?
Oh, gold is great, but greater far
Is heavenly Sympathy.

NOTES ON THE MELODIES BY SIR H. R. BISHOP.

THE BARLEY AND THE HOP.

"THE CURLY-HEADED PLOUGH-BOY," who "whistled o'er the lea," is one of those pleasing airs with which our highly-gifted and truly national composer, William Shield, has enriched the music of his country. It was written for the musical entertainment called *The Farmer*, which was first performed at Covent Garden Theatre in 1798. Of the merits of Shield as a composer it has been very justly remarked, that "he struck out for himself a style of writing, pure, chaste, and original. His prominent characteristic, however, is simplicity. No composer has ever woven so few notes into such sweet and impressive melodies, while the construction of the bass and harmony is alike natural, easy, and unaffected. We cannot open one of his operas without being instantly captivated with this quality of his music. In such delightful entertainments as *Marian* and *Rosina*, his airs breathe all the freshness, and purity, and beauty of rural life. Ballads, in all the different modes of sentiment and description, abound in his operas; and it is probable that as much of Shield's music will descend to posterity, carrying with it the intrinsic marks of English genius, as of any other writer since the days of Arne."

IF HIS HEART NEVER THROBB'D WITH AFFECTION.

"POOR ROBIN'S MAGGOT;" OR, "IF THE HEART OF A MAN."—This is one of the many beautiful airs selected by Gay for *The Beggar's Opera*. The earliest title of it we are able to trace is "Poor Robin's

Maggot," or fancy; under which name it appears in *The Dancing Master*, a collection of dance-tunes, the first edition of which was published in 1650. The construction of the melody would however warrant the belief that it is much more ancient than the date of that work. A slightly altered version of it was published in *The Convivial Songster*, of 1782, to the song entitled "Would you win a young Virgin;" and is identical with that to which Gay, in 1720, wrote Macheath's song in *The Beggar's Opera*, "If the Heart of a Man is depress'd with cares."

I LAY IN SORROW, DEEP DISTRESS'D.

"HEY, BOYS, UP GO WE," from which this air has been taken, was one of the dance-tunes published about the middle of the seventeenth century, in Playford's *Dancing Master*. In the following century we meet with it in several of the ballad-operas, words having in each instance been adapted to the music. As a Cavalier song, probably with the words by D'Urfe, it is said to have been honoured with the approbation of Charles the Second. This is very doubtful; but even were it not, from that monarch's little feeling for English music, it may be surmised that the Royalist words formed the principal merit of the song in his estimation. The judicious alteration of the original measure from jig-time to what is technically termed common-time has been followed in the present instance, to the manifest improvement of the air, which affords another proof of the adaptability of many of our old and almost forgotten "tunes" to worthier purposes than those to which they have been hitherto applied.



THE BARLEY AND THE HOP.

Gaily, but not too quick..

AIR, "THE CURLY-HEADED PLOUGHBOY."

THE CURLY-HEADED TROUBADOUR.

The musical score consists of four staves of music for piano and voice. The piano part is in the bass and treble staves, with dynamics like *f*, *p*, *cres.*, *tf*, and *f*. The vocal part is in the soprano staff, with lyrics in the middle section. The piano part includes a section with a bass line and chords, and a section with a bass line and a treble line. The vocal part has a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth note patterns. The lyrics are as follows:

'Twas in the morn-ing ear - ly, The grass was wet with dew, That young and lus - ty Bar - ley Went

o'er the fields to woo. His cheek was like the cher - ry, His beard like thread-ed gold, His laugh was loud and

cres.

mer - ry, His step was brisk and bold. He sought his la - dy, smil - ing, And fall - ing on his knee, Exclaim'd, "Without be - guil - ing, I've come to mar - ry thee!"

Oh, mo - dest was the maid - en, And come - ly to be seen, Her robes of green ar - ray'd in, And gemm'd with dia - mond sheen. Her hair, in ring - lets yel - low, Hung clus - t'ring o'er her eyes; Her breath was sweet and

mel - low, Like balm of sum - mer skies. "Sweet maid," quoth he, "thy beau - ty Ex - cels the flaunting

Vine! To love thee is a du - ty; I die to make thee mine."

All blus-hing to be - hold him, She strove to an-swer "Nay!" But soft-ly whisp'-ring told him To

p

name the hap - py day. Hop shook her gold - en tress - es, The bearded Bar - ley sprang, And birds in green re -

cres.

with energy

cess - es Their bri - dal cho - rus sang. Long may this cou - ple flou - rish In ev' - ry froth-ing

mf

p

can, Our drooping strength to nou - rish, And cheer the heart of man.

cres.

mf

f





IF HIS HEART NEVER THROBB'D WITH AFFECTION.

In moderate time, and with expression.

AIR, "POOR ROBIN'S MAGGOT;" OR,
"IF THE HEART OF A MAN."

sent to re-ceive him as lov - er of mine.

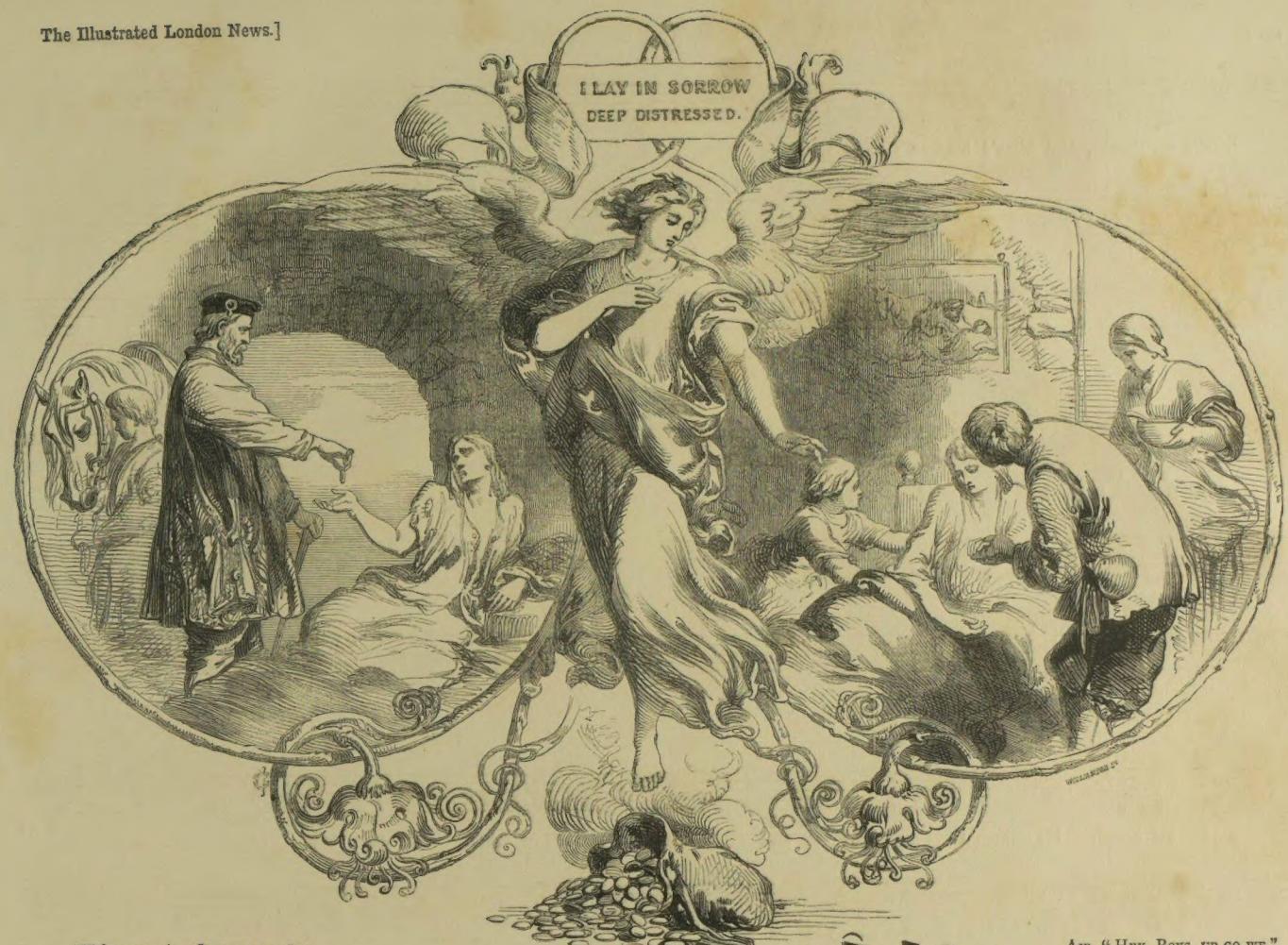
But if he be mo - dest, pure-mind-ed, and true, If from faults of his own his best sym - pa-thies grew; If

warm in his feel - ing, To Sor-row ap - peal-ing, He pi - ties and loves where the harsh might pur - sue; Un - known to the world, he may

wan - der a - part, At the sound of his name no ap - plau-ses may start; But I shall not, I may not, I will not, I dare not, Re -

fuse him my friendship, my hand, and my heart.





With expression, but not too slow.

AIR, "HEY, BOYS, UP GO WE."

With expression, but not too slow.

p

f e marcato.

p

I lay in sor - row, deep dis-tress'd; My grief a proud man heard: His looks were cold, he

gave me gold, But not a kind - ly word. My sor - row pass'd;—I paid him back The gold he gave to

me; Then stood e-rect and spoke my thanks, And bless'd his Cha - ri - ty. Then stood e-rect and

mf

p

mf

spoke my thanks, And bless'd his Cha - ri - ty.

f e marcato.

I lay in want, in grief and pain; A poor man pass'd my way: He bound my head, he

gave me bread, He watch'd me night and day. How shall I pay him back a - gain For

all he did to me? Oh, gold is great, but great - er far Is heaven - ly Sym - pa -

thy! Oh, gold is great, but great - er far Is heaven - ly Sym - pa - thy!

